



The Gateshead Housing Company Board of Directors

Thursday 20 January 2011 at 10am

To be held in the Board Room, Keelman House, Fifth Avenue
Business Park, Fifth Avenue, Team Valley Trading Estate,
Gateshead, Tyne and Wear

Agenda

Item	Business
1.	Apologies for Absence
2.	Declarations of Interest
	<u>ITEMS FOR DECISION</u>
3.	Minutes (Pages 3-6) To approve as a correct record the minutes of the last meeting of the Board held on 11 November 2010
4.	Matters Arising
5.	Board Recruitment, Retention and Succession Plan (Pages 7-) Report of Director of Finance
6.	Proposed Rent Increase for 2011/12 (Pages 25-27) Report of Director of Finance
7.	The Gateshead Housing Company Community Fund (Pages 28-34) Report of Chief Executive
	<u>ITEMS FOR INFORMATION</u>
8.	Minutes of Asset Management Committee held on 15 December 2010 (Pages 35-40) Attached

Item	Business
9.	Local Decisions; a Fairer Future for Social Housing – Consultation Response (Pages 41-52) Report of Chief Executive
10.	Decent Homes Backlog Funding for Council Landlords 2011/15 – Invitation to Bid (Pages 53-55) Report of Chief Executive
11.	Fees and Charges (Pages 56-74) Report of Director of Finance
12.	Severe Weather – December 2010 (Pages 75-82) Report of Chief Executive
13.	Petitions Update (Pages 83-85) Report of Chief Executive
14.	Outstanding Issues (Pages 86-88) Report of Chief Executive
15.	Forward Plan (Pages 89-91) Report of Chief Executive
16.	Feedback from Outside Bodies and Events
17.	Items for Future Agendas
18.	Date and Time of Next Meeting The next meeting of the Board will be held on Thursday 10 March 2011 at 10am in the Board Room at Keelman House, Fifth Avenue Business Park, Fifth Avenue, Team Valley Trading Estate, Gateshead
19.	Exclusion of the Press and Public The Board may wish to exclude the press and public during consideration of the remaining business in accordance with the categories 1, 5 and 6 of the company's Access to Information Rules.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

11 November 2010

PRESENT:

Directors

Peter Mole (Deputy Chair in the Chair)
Robert Buckley
Joanne Carr
George Clark
Pauline Dillon
Paul Foy
John Hamilton
Joachim Moussounda Mouanda
Gordon Spring
Sara Woolley

Advisers

Bill Fullen	Chief Executive
Jon Mallen-Beadle	Director of Finance
Neil Bouch	Director of Housing Management
Paul Proud	Acting Director of Property and Technical Services
Stuart Gibson	Company Administrator

Apologies for Absence

Richard Armitage
Stan Dawson
Barbara Dennis
Kathryn Ferdinand
Bill Patterson

70 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No interests were declared.

71 BARBARA DENNIS

The Board placed on record its best wishes to Barbara Dennis for a speedy recovery following a recent operation.

72 NEW DIRECTORS

The Chair welcomed Joanne Carr, George Clark and Gordon Spring to their first Board Meeting.

73 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR

RESOLVED – That Barbara Dennis and Peter Mole be appointed as Chair and Deputy Chair of the Board until the first meeting of the Board after the next Annual General Meeting.

74 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting of the Board held on 23 September 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

75 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Board, at its meeting held on 23 September 2010, approved the appointments of Joanne Carr and George Clark as Independent Directors and Gordon Spring as a Tenant Director, subject to approval by the Council's responsible officer. The responsible officer approved the appointments at the Annual General Meeting, also held on 23 September 2010.

There are currently two vacancies on the Customers and Communities and Asset Management Committees. There is currently one vacancy on Resources and Audit Committee. Following consultation with the new directors, they have indicated their preferred committees.

RESOLVED – That the new directors be appointed onto the following committees of the Board: -

Asset Management Committee

Joanne Carr
Gordon Spring

Customers and Communities Committee

Joanne Carr
Gordon Spring

Resources and Audit Committee

George Clark

76 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

The Resources and Audit Committee, at its meeting held on 9 March 2010, was informed of the appointment of Price Waterhouse Coopers to carry out a review of risk management. Following the review, a number of actions were agreed.

One of these actions was to completely review the company's strategic and operational registers and agree a revised format for both registers to ensure

consistency. This also included revising the scoring process for both registers so that again a consistent mechanism was used.

An updated Strategic Risk Register was submitted. A four scale matrix has been used for impact and likelihood. The risk register will be reviewed by the Board three times each year.

The Board will have an annual planning session to undertake a full review of the strategic risks to identify any emerging risks and to update the current risks proposed.

An updated Operational Risk Register was approved by Resources and Audit Committee at its meeting on 4 November 2010.

RESOLVED – That the updated Strategic Risk Register be approved.

77 MINUTES OF CUSTOMERS AND COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of Customers and Communities Committee held on 20 October 2010 were submitted.

RESOLVED – That the minutes be noted.

78 MINUTES OF RESOURCES AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

The minutes of the meeting of Resources and Audit Committee held on 4 November 2010 were submitted.

RESOLVED – That the minutes be noted.

79 PERFORMANCE – SECOND QUARTER 2010/11

The Board was informed of the results of those performance indicators which can be reported at the end of the second quarter in 2010/11.

There are currently 42 key performance indicators which are included within the delivery plan and which are monitored and reported to the Board on a quarterly basis.

At the end of the second quarter of 2010/11, 33 indicators were measureable and nine indicators were not yet measureable.

Of the measureable performance indicators: -

- 19 indicators traffic lighted green. This shows that the company is on target to achieve the annual target set for these indicators. This is up from 15 in the first quarter.
- Three indicators are traffic lighted amber. This shows that the company has not met the target set to date although performance is improved on prior year. This is down from four indicators in the first quarter.
- 11 indicators are traffic lighted red. This shows that the company has not met the target set and performance has fallen compared to the prior year. This is up from eight indicators in the first quarter.

- Nine indicators are not yet measurable/baseline year, down from 15 in the first quarter.

The analysis therefore indicates that at the end of the second quarter, performance relating to 22 out of the 33 measurable performance indicators can be traffic lighted as on target or improving.

Overall, there are six more indicators measurable in the second quarter and of these three indicators are on target and three indicators are not on target and down from last year. Performance has improved on one indicator to move it up to being on target.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

80 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

RESOLVED – That the Board receive a report on the repairs and maintenance service retender to agree the retender process.

81 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next Board Meeting will be held on Thursday 20 January 2011 at 10am in the Board Room, Keelman House, Fifth Avenue Business Park, Fifth Avenue, Team Valley, Gateshead.

82 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining business in accordance with the indicated categories of the company's Access to Information Rules.

83 MINUTES OF RESOURCES AND AUDIT COMMITTEE (Category 1 and 4)

The minutes of the meeting of Resources and Audit Committee held on 4 October and 4 November 2010 were submitted.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

84 TSA REVIEW / COMPREHENSIVE SPENDING REVIEW / HRA REFORM / HOUSING AND WELFARE BENEFITS

The Board received a presentation on the potential impact on the company of the comprehensive spending review and the proposed reforms the Tenants Services Authority, Housing Revenue Account, Housing and Welfare Benefits and Tenure.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

Report to the Board

20 January 2010



Title: Board Recruitment, Retention and Succession Plan

Report of: Director of Finance

Purpose of report

1. To approve a Board Recruitment, Retention and Succession Plan.

Background

2. A review of the Board and committee structure took place in 2009 with a need to refocus the work of the Board and committees to concentrate effort on where it can have greatest impact and harness the expertise of Board Members in a more effective manner.
3. Board recruitment, retention and succession planning is crucial to business success, preparing the business for likely or inevitable changes now, in order to minimise difficulties and challenges later. This involves planning for the smooth continuation in key personnel which includes the Board, where the company depends greatly on the availability of competent highly skilled people.
4. Although arrangements have previously been in place for the recruitment and retention of directors, these arrangements have never been formally approved by the Board. In addition, formal arrangements are not in place to plan for succession.
5. A draft Board Recruitment, Retention and Succession Plan is attached at the Appendix to this report. The plan will assist Board members in their current and future roles to lead and drive the company strategically, in the delivery of its vision and objectives.

Link to Values

6. This report relates to the following company values: -
 - Being honest, accountable and transparent,
 - Being a listening and learning organisation.

Risk Management Implications

7. The plan has been developed to mitigate the risk of being unable to fill vacancies or retain directors on the Board.

Value for Money Implications

8. There are no value for money implications directly arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

9. The company's commitment to equality and diversity is clearly defined within the plan.
10. An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for the plan and all the adverse impacts can be met through the successful implementation of the Action Plan.

Financial Implications

11. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

Health Implications

12. Although there are no direct health implications as a result of this report, the implementation of the plan would have positive impact on the health and well being of Gateshead residents.

Environmental Implications

13. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Consultation carried out

14. Research into succession planning arrangements within other ALMOs has been carried out when developing the plan.

Impact on Customers

15. The successful implementation of the plan will have a positive impact on customers.

Recommendation

16. The Board is recommended to approve the Board Recruitment, Retention and Succession Plan.



BOARD RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND SUCCESSION PLAN



Board Recruitment, Retention and Succession Plan

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Board Succession Plan demonstrates how The Gateshead Housing Company plans for the future when dealing with Board Member recruitment, retention and development.
- 1.2 Succession planning is crucial to business success, preparing the business for likely or inevitable changes now, in order to minimise difficulties and challenges later. This involves planning for the smooth continuation in key personnel which includes the Board, where the company depends greatly on the availability of competent highly skilled people.
- 1.3 The company must have the optimum mix of people, skills and knowledge to ensure its continued success. Having a formalised succession plan enables the company to know exactly what course of action we plan to take, when and how.
- 1.4 The plan will ensure that effective and efficient governance of the company is assured at all times, through the Board and its committees.

2. Business Planning

- 2.1 Succession planning forms part of the company's wider business planning process, because as the company changes, the Board and its membership must also change to meet the new challenges.
- 2.2 An effective Board is key to the success of the company. The plan will assist Board members in their current and future roles to lead and drive the company strategically, in the delivery of its vision and objectives: -

Vision

To provide excellent homes and housing services.

Objectives for 2009-13

The objectives agreed by the company as part of the business plan 2009-2013 focus on three broad areas:

- ♥ People
- ♥ Assets and Neighbourhoods
- ♥ Resources

The company's objectives set out a wider role for the company, supporting community and neighbourhood regeneration and shaping future housing provision across the borough.

To deliver our vision and objectives, the company needs to be well run and well managed, led therefore by a Board who understands its responsibilities of governance and one that demonstrates its commitment to its achievement through their actions. This will involve them developing as individuals and as a Board. The Board's central role is to direct the company's work, that is to

determine strategic direction, deliver the terms of the Management Agreement, approve overall expenditure and policies, and be accountable and transparent in decision-making. To do this, we need to recruit the right people, work to retain them and help them to continually develop. This Plan is designed to meet these recruitment and retention requirements.

3. Equality and Diversity

- 3.1 The plan demonstrates how we intend to meet the commitment the company has to the principles of equality and diversity, including striving to ensure the Board is representative of the community it serves. The company believes everyone should be treated fairly and with respect whilst living in an environment free from discrimination and harassment.
- 3.2 The company will achieve this by making equality and diversity part of everything we do on a day-to-day basis, the Board are pivotal to developing this culture as the company's strategic leaders.
- 3.3 The plan shows in detail a clear determination to this goal by the Board being representative of the community it serves and attaining a high level of knowledge and awareness of local issues that affect diverse communities. The company recognise the business case for diversity, ensuring the talents of all are keenly sort and properly developed.

4. The Board and committees – understanding roles

Board

- 4.1 The Gateshead Housing Company is an Arms length Management Organisation (ALMO), wholly owned by Gateshead Council and managed by a Board of 15 Non-executive Directors, referred to in the company as Board Members. There are three constituent parts to the Board: - five Independents; five Tenants and five Council nominees. Day to day management is the responsibility of the employees of The Gateshead Housing Company headed by the Chief Executive and his Corporate Management Team.
- 4.2 The Board's central role is to direct the organisation's work – that is to determine strategic direction, deliver the terms of the Management Agreement (with Gateshead Council) and overall expenditure and policies.

Committees

- 4.3 A review of the Board and committee structure took place in 2009 with a need to refocus the work of the Board and committees to concentrate effort on where it can have greatest impact and harness the expertise of Board Members in a more effective manner.
- 4.4 The following three committees were established and meet on a quarterly basis: -

Customers and Communities

- ♥ Estate Management including local environmental issues
- ♥ Tenancy Management
- ♥ HomeChoice
- ♥ Customer Service and Access (including repairs reporting)
- ♥ Complaints and Compliments
- ♥ Customer Satisfaction and Service Standards
- ♥ Involvement
- ♥ Equality and Diversity
- ♥ Relevant Performance

Asset Management

- ♥ Stock and Estate Investment (including garages)
- ♥ Capital Programme
- ♥ Planned Maintenance
- ♥ New Build
- ♥ Repairs Programme
- ♥ Relevant Performance

Resources and Audit

- ♥ Human Resources
- ♥ Organisational Development including Governance development
- ♥ Budget Monitoring - Repairs and Maintenance and Capital
- ♥ Health and Safety
- ♥ ICT
- ♥ Internal and External Audit
- ♥ Risk Management
- ♥ Financial Control and Procurement
- ♥ Relevant Performance

- 4.5 Membership of each committee has been increased from six to eight and the quorum increased to three.
- 4.6 An Executive Overview Committee has also been established to consider the remuneration of strategic employees (including the Chief Executive) and Board Members allowances. Membership comprises of the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Board and Chairs of the committees.
- 4.7 Governance, major policy issues and quarterly performance indicator results are dealt with by the Board which meets two-monthly. Appropriate time has been set aside for the Board to discuss issues without the necessity for a formal report.

5. Board Recruitment

Tenant Directors

- 5.1 Tenant Directors must be a secure tenant or leaseholder who live in Gateshead, or a member of their household who has lived in the property for at least 12 months. Applicants must be supported by a minimum of five other Gateshead tenants or leaseholders to meet the criteria.

5.2 A person will not be eligible to be a Board Member if: -

- ♥ They are or have been in the last four years, a Gateshead Councillor.
- ♥ They are employed by The Gateshead Housing Company or Gateshead Council in work directly associated with monitoring the company.
- ♥ Gateshead Council has got a current court order against that person, or commenced legal proceedings beyond Notice of Seeking Possession for arrears of rent and that person has not been keeping to a regular repayment plan, or have more than two months arrears.
- ♥ Gateshead Council has issued that person with a Notice of Seeking Possession because he/she has broken one or more of the conditions of his/her tenancy agreement other than for rent arrears.

Casual Vacancies

- 5.3. The company's Articles of Association require that the Board may only fill a casual vacancy for a Tenant Director where the Tenants Forum has failed within three months of a written request by the company to make a nomination to fill such a vacancy. However, the Tenants Forum was disbanded in 2008. Since that time, there has been no formal body within Gateshead that represents the view of tenants. The Council is currently taking forward the development of a Co-regulation Model (Gateshead Independent Tenants Organisation). The aim is to establish the new organisation in 2011.
- 5.4. Interim arrangements have been put in place whilst there is no recognised Tenants Organisation within Gateshead. Applicants are shortlisted and interviewed by an Interview Panel of three Board Members, including at least one tenant director. The Panel receives advice from the company's Chief Executive and/or Director of Finance.
- 5.5. Generally, the appointment process will be handled by the company. When a casual vacancy occurs, it will be widely advertised through the company's tenants newspaper, the local press, on the company website and to a diverse range of other groups.
- 5.6. The Board must endorse the appointment and the Council must approve any appointment. The appointed director will hold office until the next Annual General Meeting of the company. If not re-appointed, he/she will vacate office at the conclusion of that meeting.

Independent Directors

- 5.8 Independent Directors must possess the necessary skills and appointments are primarily made to fill any gaps, although applications from a person residing in Gateshead or works or has a business in the borough or has a knowledge of the area would be considered favourably.
- 5.9 Applicants need to be able to absorb and analyse complex information and accept collective responsibility for decision making. Some knowledge of the role of social housing and/or a position of responsibility in the community in Gateshead is desirable.

5.10 In order to ensure that collectively the Board has the skills necessary for it to manage the company, skills and experience in one or more of the following areas are also relevant: -

- ♥ General business and management – strategic decision-taking, business planning, staff management, team working and corporate governance.
- ♥ Social housing issues in Gateshead – needs and aspirations of residents and the community and equal opportunities.
- ♥ Specific business and management knowledge – management of property and contracts, finance and treasury, legal, management of information technology, public relations and presentations.

5.11 The Chair of the Board will identify any skills gaps and appointments will be made to try to fill those gaps.

5.12 Vacancies are widely advertised through the company's tenants newspaper, local businesses, other housing organisations, the company and Housing News websites and in the local press.

5.13 Generally, the Board appoints an Interview Panel consisting of the Chairs of the Board and Resources and Audit Committee and another Board member to make the appointment. The Panel receives advice from the company's Chief Executive and/or Director of Finance.

5.14 The Panel has delegated powers to make the appointment. The appointed director will hold office until the next Annual General Meeting of the company. If not re-appointed, he/she will vacate office at the conclusion of that meeting. The appointment must be approved by the Council.

6. Succession Rules

6.1 The company's Articles of Association set out the rules governing succession through a rotational plan for each of the three constituent groups of Board Members. The following rotational plan applies to Board retirements: -

- ♥ Tenant Directors – One Tenant Director shall retire from office at each Annual General Meeting.
- ♥ Independent Directors – One Independent Director shall retire from office at each Annual General Meeting.
- ♥ Council Directors – Appointed annually by Gateshead Council who has the power to remove from office a Council Director at any time.

6.2 The benefit of using a rotational plan is that it ensures that we retain a level of continuity and consistency within the Board at all times yet providing an opportunity for the composition to be reviewed when new members can join the Board who can bring new ideas, knowledge, skills and experience.

6.3 It is important to have a retirement policy with a limit on the amount of time a director can serve. The Gateshead Housing Company limit is set at a period of no more than 10 consecutive years or four consecutive terms of office, whichever is the lesser. However, on application to the Board, the Board may allow a Board

Member to serve beyond the maximum period of office on such terms as it deems fit, subject to approval by the shareholder.

7. Annual Board Member Appraisal

- 7.1 The Board Member Appraisal Process is an integral part of succession planning as it is used as a valuable tool in reviewing and monitoring performance of individual Board Members and of the Board and its committees. The appraisal process therefore assesses current competencies and measures the scope of increasing those competencies in the desired areas through development of current members or through recruitment of new.
- 7.2 Each Board Member currently receives an individual appraisal with the Chair to review their performance during the previous year and to agree training/development needs for the future.

8. Succession Plan – Aims/Objectives

Plan Aims

- 8.1 The plan aims to ensure the company takes a more strategic approach to business continuity and growth by ensuring: -
- “We have the right people in key positions at all times”
- 8.2 The Board has the responsibility of leading the company, it is therefore crucial that Board Members have the right skills for today’s activities but also for the future. The Board acknowledge that skills, knowledge and experience required to effectively steer the company will change over time in response to market developments / requirements, opportunities and challenges.
- 8.3 In carrying out an annual review of this plan we know that when we recruit we are aware of the Board requirements and have a plan describing how to get there. The plan therefore sets out clearly the actions necessary in retaining, developing and recruiting Board Members but also preparing the company for changes planned and otherwise.
- 8.4 Gearing up succession planning is a must do activity so that we have people in place who are experienced and prepared to take the lead in building the company and taking it forward.

Plan Objectives

- 8.5 The Plan objectives are: -
- ♥ The Board possess the required skills, knowledge and experience to enable them to effectively carry out their role – This relates to the annual appraisal and continual development of the Board. Also focussed recruitment addressing skills gaps.

- ♥ The Board is representative of the community it serves – This demonstrates the company’s commitment to equality and diversity in all that we do.
- ♥ Feeder groups/individuals (Service Improvement Groups, Leaseholder Forum, Co-optees etc.) are developed within the company to build capacity of others who may aspire to be a Board Member or want to be part of the decision-making process – This ensures that the process of recruitment and building of skills is continuous and also helping to promote the work of the company.
- ♥ Board Members receive appropriate training in the roles of Chairs – This recognises the additional skills required for a Chair of the Board and committees.
- ♥ To continually raise the profile of the Board in the community – By raising the Board’s profile, interest in the Board will be enhanced and hopefully lead to an increase in applicants for vacancies.

9. Action Plan

- 9.1 The action plan clearly sets out the factors to be taken into account and the processes to be followed in relation to retaining or replacing personnel on the Board. The plan is designed to deliver the five objectives of the Plan that have been identified and will, when successfully delivered, deliver the desired outcomes.

10. Review

- 10.1 This plan will be reviewed annually.

Succession Plan – Action Plan

Objective 1 The Board possess the required skills, knowledge and experience to enable them to effectively carry out their role				
Ref.	Action	Timetable	Lead Officer	Intended Outcome
1.1.	Board Members to complete a self-assessment of skills and knowledge - annually	Annually By March	Stuart Gibson	Skill gaps identified on an annual basis and met through a development programme for the forthcoming year and recruitment when appropriate.
1.2.	Board Members to complete an appraisal with the Chair of the Board	Annually by October	Stuart Gibson	Identify development areas for Board Members and for how the Board functions.
1.3.	Take account of identified skills gaps and provide development sessions in the relevant areas	Produce development programme annually by November	Stuart Gibson	Skill gaps addressed. Board Members will show proficiency in carrying out their role and have sufficient knowledge in key areas to enable them to carry out their role effectively.
1.4.	Advertisements to fill vacancies highlight skills required	Include in adverts as they arise	Stuart Gibson	Skills gaps addressed by encouraging new members with the required skills.
1.5.	Advertise vacancies in the local and area press as they arise	Advertise as and when required	Stuart Gibson	Achieve transparency in recruitment and provide opportunity to a wide audience.
1.6	New Board Members receive a comprehensive induction into the company, including an induction pack	Programme of induction within one month of registering as a Board Member	Stuart Gibson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Board Members are assimilated into the company as quickly as possible • Board Members have the confidence and knowledge to participate at meetings within three months • Board Members understand their roles and the company

Objective 1 The Board possess the required skills, knowledge and experience to enable them to effectively carry out their role				
Ref.	Action	Timetable	Lead Officer	Intended Outcome
1.7	Chair of Board to carry out Induction Impact Assessment of New Board Members	Six months after new Board Member has been in office	Stuart Gibson	To satisfy Chair that new Board Member has settled into role and there are no outstanding development needs
1.8	Regular refresher training on role of the Board	Annual	Stuart Gibson	Board Members are kept up to date with current developments that effect Board Members' responsibilities as a director

Objective 2 The Board is representative of the community it serves				
Ref.	Action	Timetable	Lead Officer	Intended Outcome
2.1	Complete equality and diversity monitoring of current Board Members and compare with borough customer profile	Annually before recruitment and complete within 30 days of new appointments	Stuart Gibson	Understand equality and diversity make-up of the Board so that gaps are identified when comparing with borough make-up so that they can be addressed. Achievement of a board that is representative of the community it serves.
2.3	Carry out series of 'outreach' events to publicise the work of the company and how to become a Board Member	Attendance at diversity groups during the year – carry out annually	Stuart Gibson	Increase awareness of the Board, its role and how these groups can be part of it.
2.4	Advise Hard to Reach groups of vacancies on the Board	Contact when vacancy is known	Stuart Gibson	Increase awareness locally of Board's existence, its role and how people in these groups can be part of it. Demonstrating the benefits such as being part of local decision-making.
2.5	Include in vacancy adverts that the company supports and welcomes applications from all the community, highlighting areas where the Board is under-represented.	At design of advert	Stuart Gibson	Increased awareness locally that Board membership is open to all. Increased representation from targeted groups.
2.6	Develop posters and other recruitment literature that sets out the duties of a Board Member,	Produce three months in advance of the	Ian Clarkin / Stuart Gibson	Increased awareness of the Board and its role in the company and impact on the community. That Board membership is

Objective 2 The Board is representative of the community it serves				
Ref.	Action	Timetable	Lead Officer	Intended Outcome
	which highlights the importance of their role in the community. Promotional material will promote equality of opportunity. Produce in different languages as required.	AGM		open to all sections of the community. People understand the benefits of being involved at a strategic level, in decision-making that affects them.

Objective 3 Groups/individuals are developed within the company to build capacity				
Ref.	Action	Timetable	Lead Officer	Intended Outcome
3.2.	Establish Task & Finish working groups of Board Members to look in detail at specific areas, for example business plan development	Establish groups as required	Stuart Gibson	Increasing Board Member skills and ownership.
3.3.	Engage with Service Improvement Groups advising on recruitment activities	Arrange as appropriate	Louise Taylor	Increasing the awareness of the SIGs, raising interest in becoming a Board Member.
3.4.	Develop a programme for Service Improvement Group members to potentially step up to SIG Steering Group membership	End of 2011	Louise Taylor	Increase the SIG Member skill levels.
3.5.	Involve the Leaseholders Forum in Board recruitment by promoting the work of the board	Annually by June each year	Janice Adams	Increase the number of Leaseholders with experience of making strategic company decisions. Building Leaseholder confidence. Increase interest in board work. Develop the skills of a wider group of Leaseholders.
3.6.	Develop Co-optees that will from time to time be part of the committee structures	As the opportunity arises	Stuart Gibson	Co-optees are confident and skilled to be able to apply to join the Board when a vacancy arises.

Objective 4 Board Members receive appropriate training in the roles of Chairs and Deputy Chairs				
Ref.	Action	Timetable	Lead Officer	Intended Outcome
4.1.	Board Members receive appropriate training in the roles of Chairs	Offer this training annually and include in Board Training and Development Plan	Stuart Gibson	Increase the number of Board Members with the skills required to carry out the role of Chair or Deputy Chair.
4.2.	Encourage Board Members to take the role of Chair of working groups of the Board	As groups are established	Stuart Gibson	Give the opportunity to Board Members who are not Chair of the Board or its committees to try out and improve their skills.

Objective 5 Continually raise the profile of the Board in the community				
Ref.	Action	Timetable	Lead Officer	Intended Outcome
5.1.	Advertise all Board meetings in the local press and offer opportunities to raise questions	Bi-monthly	Stuart Gibson	Increase awareness of the company and the Board. Encourage/raise public interest in the work of the Board
5.2.	Promote the work of the Board at the Service Improvement Groups and Leaseholders Forum	Quarterly	Louise Taylor / Janice Adams	Increased awareness locally of existence of the Board and of the opportunity of being involved. Increased number of local people demonstrating an interest to become a Board Member.
5.3.	Encourage the Service Improvement Groups / Leaseholders Forum to raise questions for the Board	At every meeting	Louise Taylor / Janice Adams	Increased involvement in decision-making
5.4.	Publish Board reports and minutes on the company website	Publish five working days before meeting	Stuart Gibson	Demonstrate transparency. Increase public awareness and interest of the work of the Board.
5.5.	Publish articles from Board Members in the Company Newspaper	Every three months	Ian Clarkin	Increase interest in the work of the Board and stimulate interest in joining the Board.
5.6.	Develop a database of individuals that are interested in Board Membership by running periodic recruitment campaigns	Annually	Stuart Gibson	A list of individuals who are interested in becoming Board Members.
5.7.	Invite potential Board Members to Board meetings as observers	As appropriate	Stuart Gibson	Will promote potential Board Member understanding of their role prior to their making a commitment.
5.8.	Make an early approach to discuss with current independents to possibly stand again.	As appropriate	Stuart Gibson	Board continuity and consistency of approach to decision-making



**Report to Board
20 January 2011**

Title: Proposed Rent Increase for 2011/12

Report of: Director of Finance

Purpose of Report

1. To seek approval of the proposed increase to the rents for 2011/12 for The Gateshead Housing Company owned properties.

Background

2. The rent and service charge setting policy was approved by the Board of Directors at a meeting on 21 January 2010 and a subsequent update on 12 May 2010.
3. The rent and service charge setting policy details that the initial rent period for an assured tenancy must be in place for a minimum of 12 months. The properties let during 2010/11, will not see a rent increase in April 2011.
4. However, we will increase the rents should any properties become void as the new tenants would be due to pay rent at the 2011/12 rental costs. These rents will be increased in line with the provisions within the rent and service charge setting policy which allow for rents to be increased by inflation plus a maximum of 1%. We will undertake the rent increase in line with the guidelines as set out by the Homes and Communities Agency as they are within the parameters provided for in our rent and service charge setting policy.

Proposed increase

5. The rent increase has been proposed in line with the HCA guidelines of RPI + 0.5% and is included in the Appendix. RPI in November was 4.7%; this provides an increase of 5.2%, which is an average weekly rental increase of £4.18.

Impact on Tenants

6. The impact on tenants is in relation to the rents and service charges which will be charged which are detailed within the Appendix.
7. The rent and service charge setting policy details the reviews in relation to the rents and service charges and also provides tenants with the means to appeal any decisions made in relation to their rents and service charges.

Risk Management Implications

8. The risks associated with the setting of rents and service charges are included within the risk register for the new build project. The Rent and Service Charge Setting Policy will ensure that rents are set at a level to reduce the risks associated with setting incorrect rents.

Financial Implications

9. The Rent and Service Charge Setting Policy has financial implications in relation to the income to be received by the Housing Company – the rents have been set initially at a level that will ensure we can cover the amount provided from reserves and also to ensure that these are not substantially higher than current rents paid for similar properties in the Gateshead area.

Health Implications

10. There are no direct health implications arising from this report.

Value for Money Implications

11. There are no Value for Money implications arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

12. There are no equality and diversity implications with this report.

Consultation Carried Out

13. No consultation has been carried out with this policy

Recommendation

14. The Board is recommended to approve the proposed rent increases for TGHC owned properties for 2011/12.

St Cuthbert's Rent Increase Calculation

Rents have been increased by 5.2%. Therefore, the rents have been set as follows for the varying types of properties:

<u>Property Type</u>	<u>2010/11 Rents 52 weeks</u>	<u>2011/12 Rents 52 Weeks</u>	<u>Weekly increase</u>
4 bed	£80.35	£84.53	£4.18



Report to the Board

20 January 2011

Title: The Gateshead Housing Company Community Fund

Report of: Chief Executive

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to:
 - Provide the board with a progress report.
 - Select a board member to represent the company on the assessment panel.
 - Seek approval for the company's contribution to the fund in 2011 and
 - Agree how resources will be used in the future.

Background

2. The Gateshead Housing Company's Community Fund was set up in 2007 by the company and its strategic partners: Frank Haslam Milan; Morrison's and the councils Local Environmental Services. The fund was established to give grants (in cash or in kind) to projects or schemes that:
 - Improve the lives of young people and young adults
 - Improve the lives of older residents
 - Help to make Gateshead a greener more sustainable place to live
 - Benefit a whole estate or neighbourhood by involving residents of all ages joining together to make a difference.
3. Grants between £500 to £10,000 can be made. The fund is administered by the community foundation for which an administrative charge is made. Each of the partners have pledged support both in money and work 'in kind' towards the fund every year up to 2010. Applications for support are considered by representatives from each of the partner organisations. Currently the company is represented by the Chair, The Chief Executive and the director of finance. Since the resignation of Val Hodge from the board there is currently a vacancy on the panel. The board may wish to select a board member as a replacement.

Community Fund Progress to Date

4. Over £150,000 worth of grant support along with £75,000 in kind support has been given between April 2007 and October 2010. Appendix one identifies the cash grants and appendix two the in kind support. Given that support for the funds was pledged up until 2010 it is now time to review the operation of the scheme and to consider its future.
5. Primarily the fund was linked to the decent homes programme and encouraged partners to contribute an element of their decent homes income back into the community. Frank Haslam Milan have now completed their decent homes programme and similarly Morrison's will complete their decent homes programme by April 2011, although they will continue as our repairs partner until March 2012. Beyond April therefore, only LES will remain as a decent homes delivery partner.
6. Over the life of the fund, LES have been unable to contribute by way of cash. However they have contributed £50,000 of in kind support.
7. The Housing Company has contributed up to £50,000 per annum (cash and in kind) along with the annual administration fee of £16,000 paid to the Community Foundation.
8. A number of organisations who have applied for funding have been rejected because they did not meet the funding criteria. This has resulted in the fund being under utilised. Perhaps there is merit therefore, in being less restrictive as to what schemes can be funded.
9. The fund has received national recognition as a cost effective means of investing in local communities and was awarded the Best Community Initiative Award in the 2009 NFA awards.

A way forward

10. The community fund is an imaginative means of promoting community and voluntary action. In the current climate of public spending constraints it is important to ensure that voluntary effort is promoted and therefore there is some merit in continuing with the community fund. It is proposed therefore that the company continues to support the community fund but at a lower level of contribution. Given past calls on the fund it is proposed that the level of support should be £30,000, with an upper limit if £5,000 per grant.
11. It is also proposed that discussions take place with LES and Morrison's as to their respective contributions in 2011.
12. In terms of funding criteria it is proposed that we simplify these to three broad themes:
 - Supporting people to overcome disadvantage.
 - Creating stronger communities.
 - Making the area a good place to live.

With resources being used for the following activities:

- Providing services and activities that work. To help groups provide new services or expand or maintain existing services, but with an emphasis on the quality and effectiveness of what is provided.
- Creating stronger organisations to help organisations grow by supporting the organisational development costs as distinct from the cost of services and to strengthen the operation of the voluntary and community sector.

Link to Values

13. This report relates to the company values of:

- Being a listening and learning organisation.
- Being customer focused, innovative and professional.

Impact on Tenants

14. Organisations who apply for funding must be able to show how tenants will benefit from the proposed project.

Risk Management

15. By allowing the community foundation to run the fund on our behalf our risks associated with this fund and distribution of the grants are well controlled.

Financial Implications

16. The company's contribution along with the administrative fee would need to be accommodated within the budget for 2011/12.

Equalities and Diversity

17. The fund is open to all groups across the borough.

Value for Money Implications

18. The fee charged by the community foundation represents good value for money, as the cost of employing a member of staff to manage the fund would be significantly higher than this cost.

Health Implications

19. A number of grants have been awarded to organisations who assist those with health issues.

Environmental Implications

20. A number of grants have resulted in improvements to the local environment.

Consultation Carried Out

21. No consultation has taken place as part of the preparation of this report. Following approval, discussions will take place with strategic partners to agree their contribution to the fund.

Recommendations

22. The Board is recommended to:
- (i) note the progress report;
 - (ii) nominate a director to replace Valerie Hodge on the assessment panel;
 - (iii) agree to a contribution of £30,000 for 2011, and instruct officers to discuss with partners their contribution to the fund for 2011;
 - (iv) agree that the maximum grant should be £5,000;
 - (v) agree to the revised criteria.

Appendix 1

GATESHEAD HOUSING COMPANY COMMUNITY FUND - GRANTS AWARDED TO DATE

Date	Organisation	Project	Area	Amount
18/04/2007	Bensham Court Tenants Association	Equipment for cinema club	Bensham	2788.00
17/07/2007	Gateshead Forum for Older People	Publicity for the Older People's Festival	Across Gateshead	2000.00
17/07/2007	Gateshead & South Tyneside Sight Service	Part time development worker & transport costs	Across Gateshead	9000.00
17/07/2007	Gateshead Supporting Children - Children North East	Family educational trips	Across Gateshead	1024.00
17/07/2007	The Interface Project	Sessional workers salary to run a homework club	Felling	2327.00
17/07/2007	Equal Arts	Garden project at Shadon House	Birtley	8000.00
17/07/2007	Seven Stars Residents Association	Resources for schools	Wrekenton	400.00
17/07/2007	Gateshead Visible EM Support Group	Room hire, refreshments, travel costs	Bensham	4600.00
13/11/2007	Route 26 Community Project	Management Committee training residential	Deckham	2775.00
13/11/2007	Teams & Bensham Community Care Project	Older Persons' Exercise Sessions	Bensham	5000.00
13/11/2007	Gateshead Crossroads Caring for Carers	Sessional youth worker costs and activity costs	Across Gateshead	7200.00
13/11/2007	Aquila Way	Community Development Work: High Mills Estate	Heworth	8000.00
17/03/2008	CRAFT (Creative Arts for Families Together)	For a computer and craft materials	Dunston	820.00
17/03/2008	Felling Community Centre	Exercise tutors, costs and materials	Felling	1421.00
17/03/2008	Fitness 4 Fun	Equipment and instructor costs for fitness group	Barley Mow	823.00
18/04/2008	Greenfields Residents Association	Items for Monday Club Coffee Morning	Ryton	400.23
11/07/2008	Co-op Women's Guild Wrekenton	Towards educational visits	Wrekenton	400.00
11/07/2008	Bensham Grove Community Centre	Towards entertainment and refreshments	Bensham	1725.00
11/07/2008	Chopwell and Blackhall Mill Live at Home Scheme	Towards one year's running costs	Chopwell	1538.00
17/03/2008	Portmeads & Kateregina Tenants Assoc	New chairs and tables	Birtley	2236.00
11/07/2008	The Interface Project	For over 55's group and expedition costs	Felling	4175.00
11/07/2008	Swalwell's Little Angels	Towards out of school activities	Swalwell	840.00
11/07/2008	Blaydon Youth Club	Towards a programme of summer activities	Blaydon	1673.00
11/07/2008	Ladybirds Parents & Carers	For dads and children activity days	Bensham	2000.00
11/07/2008	Streetlights Detached Youth Project	Keswick activity day for young people	Ryton	1240.00
11/09/2008	Grassbanks Baby & Toddler Group	Equipment, insurance and christmas trip	Leam Lane	1048.00
21/10/2008	Birtley Parent and Toddler Group	Activity costs, excluding rent	Birtley	500.00
21/10/2008	Winlton Wednesday Day Centre	Christmas trip and meal out for older people	Winlton	560.00
21/10/2008	Wayout in Gateshead	Paddle Your Own Canoe project	Across Gateshead	4376.00
21/10/2008	Children North East	Educational visits and family learning project	Across Gateshead	1550.00
02/02/2009	Rowlands Gill & District Live at Home Scheme	Towards the costs of running activities	Rowlands Gill	3278.00
18/05/2009	Pelaw Centre for Youth Activities	Sensory Oasis	Pelaw	3295.00
18/05/2009	Pre School Learning Alliance	Equipment	Across Gateshead	500.00
18/05/2009	1313 (Whickham) Squadron Air Training Corps	Expedition equipment	Dunston	1000.00
18/05/2009	Barnardo's	Refreshments for sessions at Family Centre	Across Gateshead	3250.00
10/08/2009	Gateshead Food Co-op	Grocery van	Across Gateshead	10000.00
29/09/2009	West Park Resident Association	For TV, Wii and games package and hi-fi system	Dunston	1250.00
29/09/2009	Brand New Woman	For coach costs and tickets for a show at Sunderland Empire	Kibblesworth	1341.00

29/09/2009	Carers Affected By Substance Abuse	For sofas, arm chairs, coffee table, nesting tables and delivery	Across Gateshead	2000.00
29/09/2009	D.S.D. Community, Tenants & Residents Association	Trips and Christmas Panto	Crawcrook	500.00
29/09/2009	Sow and Reap	For laptop, printer, memory stick and stationery	Across Gateshead	847.00
29/09/2009	Kibblesworth Parent and Toddler Group	For new equipment	Kibblesworth	734.00
02/11/2009	The Friends of West Lane Community Primary School	Installation of fencing around play area	Winlaton	3729.06
12/02/2010	Groundwork North East	Springwell Estate community allotment	Wrekenton	7365.00
12/02/2010	Whickham Toddler Activity Group	Up4Change project	Sunniside	1640.00
12/02/2010	Argyle Estate Residents Association	Childrens dance project	Central	1500.00
12/02/2010	Gateshead Visible EM Support Group	Cultural events	Across Gateshead	3000.00
11/03/2010	Interface Project	History Project and DofE Scheme	Felling	6000.00
19/04/2010	Children North East	Family learning outing and educational field trips	East Gateshead	2150.00
19/04/2010	Gateshead Crossroads Caring for Carers	Residential breaks for young carers	Across Gateshead	6000.00
12/07/2010	Leam Lane Community Association	dance equipment	Leam Lane	1000.00
12/07/2010	Gateshead Sapipa Junior FC	Volunteer coaching costs & storage equipment	Felling, Leam Lane	936.00
12/07/2010	Chopwell and Blackhall Mill Live at Home Scheme	Weekly lunch and social events	Chopwell	2080.00
12/07/2010	DSD Community Tenants & Residents Association	Community garden, equipment & bbq	Crawcrook	2034.00
12/07/2010	Pelaw Hertfordshire House Community Association	Chairs and coffee tables	Pelaw	1246.00
			Total	147114.29



The Gateshead Housing Company

Working with Gateshead Council

ASSET MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

15 December 2010

PRESENT:

Directors

Sara Woolley (Chair)
Robert Buckley
Joanne Carr
Pauline Dillon
Peter Mole
Bill Patterson
Gordon Spring

Advisers

Bill Fullen	Chief Executive
Jon Mallen-Beadle	Director of Finance
Neil Bouch	Director of Housing Management
Paul Proud	Acting Director of Property and Technical Services
Stuart Gibson	Company Administrator

Apologies

Stan Dawson
Kathryn Ferdinand

10 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR

RESOLVED – That Sara Woolley and Joanne Carr be appointed as Chair and Deputy Chair the committee until the first meeting after the next Annual General Meeting.

11 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting of the committee held on 25 June 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

12 MATTERS ARISING – GAS CARE PLAN

Gary Stirling, Gas Servicing Manger will attend the next meeting of the committee to give a presentation on the measures put in place by the company to gain access to properties.

13 DECENT HOMES BACKLOG FUNDING FOR COUNCIL LANDLORDS 2011-15

The Government's Comprehensive Spending Review in October 2010 indicated that £2.1 billion will be invested between 2011-15 to help towards removing the Decent Homes backlog. Of this £1.6 billion will be available to Council landlords.

In November 2010, the Homes and Communities Agency published a proposal on how the available resources could be allocated.

A copy of the HCA document was submitted. The key points in the proposal are: -

- The HCA would not expect to fund a landlord with less than 10% of their stock non-decent, regardless of previous funding history.
- Where an authority holds a backlog of less than 10% the additional resources introduced by Housing Revenue Account reform should be sufficient to enable the authority to plan the necessary work to stock.
- Landlords with a currently funded ALMO are unlikely to receive the level of funding they have anticipated in 2011/12.
- Decent Homes funding will be available to all landlords with a decent homes backlog over 10%.

The HCA has requested responses to their proposals by 6 December 2010. A copy of the joint response from the company and the Council was submitted.

Given that the deadline precedes the date of this committee meeting, the proposed response was agreed by the Chair of the committee.

- RESOLVED – (i) That the information be noted and the joint response from the company and the Council be endorsed.
- (ii) That the issue be discussed at the Board, at its meeting on 20 January 2011, to consider what further representations could be made about the problems the proposal will cause locally should this result in the company being unable to complete its decent homes programme in 2011/12.

14 TRANSFER OF MISCELLANEOUS PROPERTIES FOR RESIDENTIAL USE – NEXT STEPS

On 15 December 2009, Gateshead Council's Cabinet approved, in principle, the disposal of four properties to the company on the basis that it would then improve, manage and maintain the properties. In return, the Council would receive 100% nomination rights in perpetuity.

The proposals contained within the Cabinet report were considered by the Board on 21 January 2010 and it was agreed that before accepting the transfer of the four properties, the Board would receive a further report detailing the business case for the transfer including the financial implications to the company.

Since the original report officers have considered the proposed transfer of properties and it has been agreed that: -

- Cloverhill Bungalow would not be considered for transfer to the company due to its location within the school grounds.
- Kibblesworth Communal Lounge would be considered for transfer to The Gateshead Housing Company as negotiations to lease the property to a GP have recently fallen through.

A further report was considered by Cabinet on 15 September 2010, a copy of which was submitted.

The Council is proposing to dispose of four properties for nil consideration to the Company subject to Secretary of State(s) consent as follows: -

- Victoria Bungalow under section 32 of the Housing Act 1985 to TGHC.
- Kibblesworth Communal Lounge under section 32 of the Housing Act 1985.
- Brandling Caretakers house under Schedule 35A Education Act 1996.
- Rowlands Gill Caretakers house under Schedule 35A Education Act 1996.

The Council's Strategic Director of Legal and Corporate Services will seek the consent of the Secretary of States for the disposal of the land held under the Housing Act 1985 and land held for education purposes at less than best consideration.

RESOLVED – (i) That it be noted that the Council's Strategic Director of Legal and Corporate Services will seek the consent of the Secretary of State(s) for the disposal of the land for the following four properties: -

- Victoria Bungalow
- Kibblesworth Communal Lounge
- Brandling Caretakers house
- Rowlands Gill Caretakers house.

(ii) That prior to accepting any transfer of property, a detailed business case setting out the financial and associated implications for the company, as well as proposed local lettings arrangements for each of the properties, be provided at a future Board for consideration.

(iii) That officers ascertain whether there are alternative ways of transferring properties to make the process less time consuming in future.

15 PROGRESS IN RETENDERING THE REPAIRS CONTRACT

Following a competitive tendering process, Morrison Facilities Services have delivered the repairs service to the Council's 21,000 tenants and leaseholders since 2005. The contract was awarded and entered into by The Gateshead Housing Company (TGHC).

The contract with Morrison expired on 31 March 2010. At the Board Meeting on 9 July 2009, the contract was extended by two years to allow the Council and TGHC to consider a number of issues, details of which were reported.

Approximately 71,400 responsive repairs are carried out each year. In addition to this, gas safety work, improvements outside of the Decent Homes Programme and works to empty homes are also carried out. Morrison also carry out adaptation works on behalf of the Council to TGHC managed homes through this contract.

Drainage and ground works are delivered by the Council due to the local expertise that this type of work requires. The spend last year was £1million.

Any new contract would look to integrate all these elements to ensure that value for money and efficiencies could be demonstrated.

The Council's repairs policy was reviewed in 2003 and again in 2006. External learning shows that the policy compared with other providers is no more generous or restrictive than other policies in terms of work that is the landlord's responsibility. It is not proposed to review the policy as part of the re-tendering although it is possible that through the process new providers might be able to deliver planned repairs at a lower target than the current 40 days.

A number of areas will be considered over the coming months around the options for retendering and the best way to package the contract, details of which were reported.

Whichever methods are adopted, the key matters to consider are:-

- what savings are available;
- what service improvements are likely to be delivered;
- what costs and actions are required to make those savings;
- where the skills and experience to manage a massive efficiency drive are going to come from;
- TUPE and pension implications;
- workforce matters.
- Mobilisation to deliver the service
- what added value will be delivered – employment/ involvement/ contribution to wider TGHC objectives.

A Procurement Team has now been appointed to work within Corporate Services. Initially the team (together with the Director of Finance and Repairs Partnering Manager) have carried out a number of peer visits to other social landlords to see how they and their repairs partners deliver the service.

The team are now working on producing a summary of their recommendations, delivery timetable and stakeholder consultation strategy.

In January 2011, the Board will receive a report on the procurement recommendations, delivery timetable and consultation strategy. An outline of the proposed timetable is as follows:

- Portfolio / Cabinet / Board sign off January 2011
- Pre qualification questionnaire ("PQQ") sent out February 2011

- PQQ's assessed March 2011
- Formal tender documents issued April 2011
- Assessment of tenders summer 2011
- Appointment by the end of 2011 with a view to the new contract starting on 1 April 2012.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

16 GATESHEAD COUNCIL CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2010/11 SECOND QUARTER REVIEW

On 16 November 2010, a report on the Capital Programme and Prudential indicators 2010/11 – Second Quarter Review was presented to the Council's Cabinet.

There is a reduction of £7.939m in the 2010/11 programme for housing schemes. These schemes are funded from the HRA prudential borrowing and have been deferred to later years in the programme.

The HRA prudential borrowing is currently capped at £48million. The Council and the company are in discussions to agree what the priorities are to determine which schemes will be funded from this borrowing. It is unlikely that the HCA will provide the final £10m ALMO funding in order to complete decent homes. To deliver the remaining improvements, the Council will need to fund this from another source, the most likely being prudential borrowing. To facilitate this other works will be deferred or will not be carried out.

The proposed self financing will transfer some of the Council's debt and set a cap on future borrowing. Until this debt cap is known there will be no further commitments to new schemes funded from the HRA unless they are required to ensure the health and safety of tenants.

The company has therefore not awarded contracts for the planned window replacement programme or the DDA works to communal areas, both of which are funding via prudential borrowing.

The remaining sustainability schemes were planned to be funded from the final £10million of ALMO funding. This should be considered separately from decent homes work when prioritising the prudential borrowing allocation. The company would therefore recommend not progressing sustainability schemes not committed or started.

RESOLVED – That the information be noted.

17 EQUIPMENT AND ADAPTATIONS PERFORMANCE 2009/10

The Equipment and Adaptations Service is a key area of support for many customers. The service is supported by joint working arrangements between the Council and the company. The company provides two levels of adaptation – minor and major.

A detailed update report on key areas of performance and service delivery for the Equipment and Adaptations Service has been produced in partnership with the Council, a copy of which was submitted.

The percentage of minor adaptations carried out within seven working days of the adaptation being approved improved by 6% in 2009/10 to 92%. Despite the increase, the target of 95% was not achieved. Of the 1122 minor adaptations installed, 1037 were completed within the seven working days, 24 short of the target.

Of the referrals to the Occupational Therapy Service waiting list, 100% were dealt with by an OT within four months of the referral.

The percentage of major adaptations completed within three months from the day work is approved fell to 87% in 2009/10, a 6% decrease. 429 major adaptations were approved during the period and 372 were completed within the target timescale. The drop in performance was as a result of an 11% increase in the number of approvals. This increase made it difficult to deliver all of the major adaptations that were approved in the period

RESOLVED – That the information be noted and an annual report for 2010/11 on the Equipment and Adaptations Service in July 2011 be requested.

18 DATE AND TIME OF MEETINGS 2011

RESOLVED – That the following schedule of meetings in 2011 be approved: -

- Thursday 24 February 2011 at 9.30am
 - Thursday 30 June 2011 at 9.30am
 - Thursday 20 October 2011 at 9.30am
- (All to be held in Board Room 2, Keelman House, Fifth Avenue Business Park, Fifth Avenue, Team Valley Trading Estate, Gateshead).

19 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining business in accordance with Category 5 of the company's Access to Information Rules.

Appendix 2

GATESHEAD HOUSING COMPANY COMMUNITY FUND - IN KIND SUPPORT TO DATE

Date	Partner	Organisation	Description	Amount	Taken up
Year 1					
Jul-07	GHC	Gateshead Forum for Older People	Publicity	1000	Yes
Jul-07	LES	Seven Stars Residents Association	Planting and maintenance of plants	2200	Yes
Jul-07	LES	Equal Arts	Hard and soft planting materials	2000	Yes
Year 2					
Nov-07	FHM	Route 26	Facilitators for training residential	0	No
Nov-07	FHM	Caedmon Choir	Copying of brochures	0	No
Nov-07	GHC	Portmeads & Kateregina Tenants & Res Ass	Furniture	2236	yes
Nov-07	LES	Friends of Whickham Library Garden	Seating, patio, raised beds and labour	5000	Yes
Nov-07	LES	Girlguiding Whickham	Roof work	0	No
Nov-07	Morrison	Wrekenton Blue Star Football Club	High fence around portakabin	0	No
Nov-07	Morrison	Stoneygate Community Association	Wild & sensory area of play park	1000	Yes
Jul-08	GHC	Kibblesworth Village Millenium Centre	Stand at summer festival event	0	No
Jul-08	GHC	Co-op Women's Guild Wrekenton	Help to increase membership	400	Yes
Jul-08	LES	Interface Project	Garden	750	Yes
Jul-08	LES	Swalwell Little Angels	Food hygiene training	0	No
Jul-08	Morrison	St Agnes Day Nursery	Repair & improve play area boundary	1500	Yes
Jul-08	Morrison	Friends of West Lane Primary School	Fence around play area	0	No
Mar-08	LES	Wrekenton Community Centre	Cupboards, installation & other fittings	1917	Yes
Mar-08	Morrison	Wrekenton Community Centre	Cupboards, installation & other fittings	3300	Yes
Year 3					
Oct-08	LES	Thomas Hepburn Parent & Toddler Group	New tables	75	No
Oct-08	LES	Gateshead & SouthTyneside Sight Service	Materials for sensory garden	10000	Yes
Feb-09	LES	Parish of Bensham & Teams PCC	For flooring, tiling & garden furnishings	2190	Yes
Feb-09	LES	Windy Nook Child Care	planting, bog garden & landscaping	5525	Yes
Feb-09	Morrison	Brandling Hall Community Association	To upgrade the kitchen area	1950	Yes
Feb-09	Morrison	Seven Stars Residents Association	skip hire for community clean up day	2000	Yes
May-09	GHC	Pre-School Learning Alliance	Publicity for roadshows	2000	ongoing
May-09	GHC	Age Concern Gateshead	Publicity for festival	1800	Yes
May-09	LES	Community Integrated Care	Accessible greenhouse	1717	Yes
May-09	LES	Grove Pre School	Equipment	2522	Yes
Sep-09	LES	Sow & Reap - Marquisway	Sensory Garden	7000	Yes
Sep-09	Morrison	Blackhall Mill Community Association	Internal & external decoration	2400	Yes
Year 4					
Feb-10	GHC	Gateshead Visible EM Support Group	Publicity for cultural events	500	ongoing
Feb-10	LES	Ryton Crawcrook & District Out of School Club	Equipment	1728	yes
Apr-10	GHC	Foundations furniture Project	Publicity and marketing materials	800	Yes
Jul-10	GHC	Route 26 Community Association	Leaflets & DVD production	500	ongoing
Jul-10	GHC	Age Concern Gateshead	Leaflets & posters	250	ongoing
Jul-10	LES	Pelaw Hertfordshire House CA	Kitchen units, fridge, cooker & decoration	7000	ongoing
Summary					
	FHM	GHC	LES	Morrison	Total
Year 1	0	1,000	4,200	0	5,200
Year 2	0	2,636	7,667	5,800	16,103
Year 3	0	3,800	29,029	6,350	39,179
Year 4	0	2,050	8,728	0	10,778

Report to the Board

20 January 2011



Title: Local decisions; a fairer future for social housing – consultation response

Report of: Chief Executive

Purpose of Report

1. To inform Board of the contents of the Company's and Council's joint response to this consultation paper.

Background

2. On 22 November 2010 the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) issued this consultation paper, a copy of which has been placed on the Board Members website, allowing an eight week consultation period with a closing date of 17 January 2011.
3. The company has worked jointly with Gateshead Council to produce a joint response which is set out in the Appendix to this report.

Summary

4. The Government has embarked on a radical programme to shift power from Westminster to councils and communities. This consultation paper sets out the Government's intention to change legislation governing the way social housing is allocated; how local authorities may discharge their main homelessness duty; and the types of tenancies granted to social housing tenants.
5. The consultation paper set out its proposals around the following eight themes and sought responses to 30 specific questions:
 - Tenure
 - Empty homes
 - Social housing allocations
 - Mobility
 - Homelessness
 - Overcrowding
 - Reform of social housing regulation, and
 - Council housing finance

Link to values

6. This report relates to the company's values of:
- Being a listening and learning organisation
 - Being honest, accountable and transparent
 - Being customer focused

Impact on tenants

7. This consultation paper has the potential to have a major impact on all existing and prospective tenants. The report sets out the company's and Council's concerns and comment.

Risk Management Implications

8. The company has identified '*Changes to Government policy adversely affecting TGHC*' as a **likely** strategic risk having **critical** impact.

Financial Implications

9. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

10. The consultation paper proposals will affect all existing and prospective tenants to varying degrees.

Value for Money Implications

11. There are no direct value for money implications from this report.

Health Implications

12. There are no direct health implications arising from this report.

Environmental Implications

13. There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report.

Consultation carried out

14. As Gateshead Council is the registered provider, this joint response was submitted by the Council to the Department for Communities and Local Government in advance of the consultation deadline.

Recommendation

15. The Board is recommended to note the joint response of the company and Council.

**LOCAL DECISIONS: A FARIER FUTURE FOR SOCIAL HOUSING
CONSULTATION**

**RESPONSE FROM GATESHEAD COUNCIL AND THE GATESHEAD
HOUSING COMPANY**

Question 1: As a landlord do you anticipate making changes in light of the new tenancy flexibilities being proposed? If so, how would you expect to use these flexibilities? What sort of outcomes would you hope to achieve?

The new affordable rent tenancy, in the absence of adequate levels of social housing grant may provide gap funding to enable new homes to be built. However, the consultation document is silent as to whether these affordable rent tenancies will be extended to Council housing.

Whilst the proposed affordable rent tenancy may provide much needed development finance to larger registered providers, its impact on smaller landlords will be limited. For example, in Gateshead our ALMO is a registered provider but has only a small number of rented homes. The level of finance generated from relets in this situation will be limited and therefore will not provide significant additional homes.

Affordable rent tenancies on new build schemes could provide adequate finance to enable regeneration schemes to be delivered.

The proposed flexible tenancy must be considered within the context of the local housing market. Analysis of tenancies in Gateshead shows that of those tenants terminating during 2009/10 the average length of tenancy was over 8 years. Only in the age group 18-25 year olds was the average length of time close to the proposed minimum of 2 years.

Gateshead would expect to be able to use the flexibility to maximise best use of stock by reviewing need in relation to underoccupation when tenancies are due to come to the end of the agreed term.

Question 2: When, as a landlord, might you begin to introduce changes?

Introducing any changes would require legislation to allow local authorities to introduce flexible tenancies.

We welcome the proposal that current secure and assured tenancies will be protected from any changes to their security or other rights even when they move. This is especially important in comprehensive regeneration schemes, where any 'demotion' of security would negatively impact on tenants' agreement to move into a new home. However we would welcome clarity on

how moves between landlords will be administered. There could be a risk that secure Council tenants won't move to another Registered Provider (RP) dwelling if the RP's properties are to be let as an affordable rent tenancy.

Question 3: As a local authority, how would you expect to develop and publish a local strategic policy on tenancies? What costs would you expect to incur?

Clearly the local authority will need to take a strategic view to ensure that all social landlords play their part in meeting local housing need. In Gateshead there is a strong tradition of collaborative working between the Council, the ALMO and RSLs, and this could form the basis for developing a strategic policy on tenancies.

There may however, be some potential for conflict between the need for authorities to respond to known and projected needs and RSLs' need to develop sustainable business plans.

Question 4: What other persons or bodies should local authorities consult in drawing up their strategic tenancy policy?

A number of authorities are delivering sub-regional choice based lettings schemes. It will therefore be essential for authorities to collaborate to ensure that strategic policies on tenancies are logical between bordering authorities.

Other bodies which should be involved in the development of the policy and not identified in the document includes the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). Whilst Local Investment Plans are to become voluntary, it is important that the HCA develops an understanding as to how the strategic tenancy policy can enable delivery of the investment plan.

Private landlord associations, (where they exist) should also be consulted, given the proposals to enable authorities to discharge their homelessness duties by an offer of privately rented accommodation.

Question 5: Do you agree that the tenancy standard should focus on the key principles? If so what should they be?

The tenancy standard should be developed around key principles that in the main allow local authorities to reflect the needs and demands within the strategic policy. Key principles need to be focussed around:

- fairness and transparency
- the local economic climate and availability of employment
- demand for housing and availability of housing within the locality
- the arrangements for vulnerable customers including those with disabilities and families
- the provision of advice and assistance for tenants whose flexible tenancy is ending.

The proposals for a minimum right to succession for new tenancies is an unwelcome reduction to the qualifying persons, and may be discriminatory in the case of a disabled adult family member who would appear unable to succeed as a result of these proposals.

Question 6: Do you have any concerns that these proposals could restrict current flexibilities enjoyed by landlords? If so, how could we best mitigate that risk?

Shorter term tenancies could present some difficulties for landlords and have additional revenue implications including:

- relet costs
- administration of tenancy reviews
- appeals
- tenants being unlikely to invest if there is no compensation for improvement or where they are likely to have to leave their home.

RSLs may be faced with differing tenancy strategies for each local authority area in which they work.

The proposals in the main provide a minimum standard and would not in themselves restrict current flexibilities. However, if best use of private tenancies is to be made then there may be an issue in establishing a minimum flexible tenancy which differs from the current tenure they currently provide. To mitigate this risk, more work needs to be with private landlords to establish the role they have within the provision of flexible tenancies. If this is not established within the bill there will be limited impact to alleviate any local pressures and provision of 'move on' accommodation at the end of flexible periods.

Question 7: Should we seek to prescribe more closely the content of landlord policies on tenancies? If so, in what respects?

Strategic policies on tenancies for the local area must be able to be developed with the needs of the local area in mind. For that reason there should be as little central prescription as possible. However, tenants and prospective tenants need to know exactly how they will be affected by the policy so that, as their tenancy progresses or their circumstances change, they can remain in control of their lives. Prospective tenants must be in a position to be able to make informed decisions about taking on a social tenancy at the point of application. Therefore issues such as tenancy type award, duration and circumstances around review and termination must be clearly set out. Where discretionary issues such as second succession are to be included, clear criteria must also exist within policy documents.

Question 8: What opportunities as a tenant would you expect to have to influence the landlord's policy?

Existing and prospective social tenants should be able to make their views known and have them taken into account regarding the creation and any subsequent review of the landlord's strategic policy.

Question 9: Is two years an appropriate minimum fixed term for a general needs social tenancy, or should the minimum fixed term be longer? If so, how long should it be? What is the basis for proposing a minimum fixed term of that length? Should a distinction be drawn between tenancies on social and affordable rents? If so, what should this be? Should the minimum fixed term include any probationary period?

A blanket minimum fixed term of two years is a relatively short period of time to apply to general needs social tenancies. Evidence in Gateshead would suggest that tenancies (not pensioners) last around 5 years. Depending upon the criteria set for tenancy review in the strategic policy, two years gives many tenants too short a time for their circumstances to have improved significantly. In reality, where landlords may become concerned about the conduct of social tenancies the ability to bring them to an end within that period already exists so there is little to be gained by setting the minimum term so low. A more sensible minimum period should be five years. There should be no distinction drawn between minimum fixed terms for social or affordable rent tenancies. Any probationary period should not count against the minimum fixed term which is consistent with the approach of managing introductory tenancies.

There are also further impacts should the minimum fixed term be shorter than five years, including the impact of turnover and increased cost of repairing voids. There is both a financial cost but also one which conflicts with the ethos around 'The Big Society' and localism, in that there will be a greatly reduced level of sustainability and identity as a community.

Question 10: Should we require a longer minimum fixed term for some groups? If so, who should those groups be and what minimum fixed terms would be appropriate? What is the basis for proposing a minimum fixed term of that length? Should a distinction be drawn between tenancies on social and affordable rents? If so, what should this be?

Those tenants who have been unemployed for long periods of time will need ongoing support to secure sustainable employment. Many will have relatively little or no educational collateral and there will be a lot of information, advice and guidance needed before they are in a position to secure employment. There are also many whose existing unemployment is of a temporary or seasonal nature or may be under threat for other reasons. These groups of people may well need a longer minimum fixed term tenancy to give them the time to be able to get back on their feet.

It would be beneficial to prescribe a minimum fixed term for those customers who are under 25 years old, whether or not they are in full time education or employment to enable them to build up experience of holding any tenure type. Furthermore those in supported accommodation or in receipt of short term support should have a minimum fixed term to enable them to establish independent living. In all scenarios a minimum of five years would be beneficial.

Question 11: Do you think that older people and those with a long term illness or disability should continue to be provided with a guarantee of a social home for life through the Tenancy Standard?

It isn't helpful to continue to refer to social tenancies as 'tenancies for life' as tenants are only able to remain in place provided tenants adhere to their conditions of tenancy. However, where fixed term tenancies do exist, there should indeed be lifetime protection for the elderly and for those who are particularly vulnerable. In these circumstances a secure tenancy should be granted that, unless there are emerging issues or needs during the tenancy, should provide for tenants to remain in the same property if they so choose.

Family make up and property type may need to be considered i.e. if an elderly person has family members that are likely to leave home a periodic review may be appropriate to alleviate the problem of single elderly people living in family homes.

Question 12: Are there other types of household where we should always require landlords to guarantee a social home for life?

Whilst people with disabilities have been mentioned, other types of household which should require a longer term or 'lifetime' tenancy are those with severe mental health issues. It would not be beneficial to provide a minimum fixed term for people with severe mental health issues which may impact in itself adversely on their health.

Question 13: Do you agree that we should require landlords to offer existing secure and assured tenants who move to another social rent property a lifetime tenancy in their new home?

Existing secure and assured tenants who move to another social rented property should, provided they have no current tenancy condition breaches and are moving out of necessity, for example either for medical reasons, to give or receive support or following a legitimate request from the landlord or other defined criteria, then they should be awarded another secure tenancy.

Question 14: Do you agree that landlords should have the freedom to decide whether new and assured tenants should continue to receive a lifetime tenancy when they move?

For future new and assured tenants who move to another social property, landlords should be required to award a secure tenancy unless there are

underlying reasons why that should not be the case. This could include concerns over a tenant's conduct during their tenancy, such as anti-social behaviour, rent arrears, damage to property provided that had been raised with the tenant during the course of that previous tenancy.

There is sufficient recourse to tackle any breaches of tenancy currently and we would not usually agree a transfer unless accounts were clear or there was no pending court action. However we cannot prevent or exclude someone from moving unless it is something for which we would otherwise get possession in court.

There should be some prescription around existing social tenants and whether they will continue to enjoy the current level of security of tenure. The absence of primary legislation around this would result in differential approaches between neighbouring authorities. This would have a particular impact where sub-regional and regional choice based lettings schemes are in operation in terms of demand for properties and the ability to move within and across LA boundaries.

Question 15: Do you agree that we should require social landlords to provide advice and assistance prior to the expiry of the fixed term of the tenancy?

Social landlords should indeed be required to provide advice and assistance in these circumstances to such an extent and until such a time that an outgoing tenant is able to take advantage of an actual offer of accommodation from a private or other social landlord in their area.

Question 16: As a landlord, what are the factors you would take into account in deciding whether to reissue a tenancy at the end of the fixed term? How often would you expect a tenancy to be reissued?

The reissuing of a fixed term tenancy should be determined by the circumstances of the household and whether they were deemed able to access alternative housing. Whilst it is not anticipated that there would be any limit on the number of times a fixed term tenancy could or would be granted, this would need to be detailed within the Strategic policy and should reflect the local context of housing availability and demand, employment and economic environment and changes in terms of vulnerability within the household. With this in mind the policy would need to be reviewed to reflect any significant changes within the national, regional and local environment.

Question 17: As a local authority, how would you expect to use the new flexibilities to decide who should qualify to go on the waiting list? What sort of outcomes would you hope to achieve? and

Question 18: In making use of the new waiting list flexibilities, what savings or other benefits would you expect to achieve?

Restricting access to waiting lists may reduce costs. However for a housing options service to be effective it will need to be well resourced. Inevitably such services will be expensive to run and will outweigh any cost savings brought about by restricting access to the waiting list. Although savings could be made if a cross boundary options service was implemented.

Question 19: What opportunities as a tenant or resident would you expect to have to influence the local authority's qualification criteria?

Existing and prospective social tenants should be able to make their views known and have them taken into account regarding qualification criteria.

Question 20: Do you agree that the current statutory reasonable preference categories should remain unchanged? Or, do you consider that there is scope to clarify the current categories?

The definition of 'welfare grounds' 'hardship grounds' need to be clarified to explicitly include those who are unable to afford other tenure types as a result of unemployment or restricted income.

Consideration has been given to the merit of including under occupation as a reasonable preference. It is felt local discretion should be applied where under occupation is perceived as a problem.

Question 21: Do you think that the existing reasonable preference categories should be expanded to include other categories of people in housing need? If so, what additional categories would you include and what is the rationale for doing so?

In previous legislation reasonable preference was given to those customers who were living in and on occasions for them to remain within the family home would render it overcrowded. This would address any hidden housing need and reduce the need for larger housing.

Question 22: As a landlord, how would you expect to use the new flexibility created by taking social tenants seeking a transfer who are not in housing need out of the allocation framework? What sort of outcomes would you hope to achieve?

Taking existing social tenants out of the allocations framework then considering them for other social housing solely through a mutual exchange service is not a particularly cost effective or efficient method. Where a social tenant wants or needs another social tenancy then they should be allowed to remain within the allocations framework. This would not only make it simpler for tenants to move locally but it would also enable landlords to make better use of their existing stock by brokering moves.

In Gateshead, transfers usually account for around 20-25% of the housing register, although many of these will have some form of other identifiable need. To exclude those with no identifiable need may therefore have little

impact overall on the register.

Consideration needs to be made on what happens to existing tenants taken out of the Register. Are mutual exchanges to be their only route to a move? Or are tenants to be given first choice of vacant homes (leaving resultant vacancies for those on the Register?) This would polarise estates, and increase turnover and expenditure on voids.

Question 23: What are the reasons why a landlord may currently choose not to subscribe to a mutual exchange service?

In Gateshead, along with other Tyne and Wear authorities we have developed a free sub-regional mutual exchange service, and have not previously subscribed as an authority to a national service (such as 'HomeSwapper' which carries fees). Any tenant looking for an exchange outside of Tyne and Wear is still able to join a national service themselves for a small fee.

However, the Tyne and Wear scheme has been represented on the national HomeSwap working group and been part of discussions around integrating existing schemes into a national framework.

There are limitations to mutual exchange services (not least of which is that a partner or possibly a chain of partners must be found to effect the exchange). As a means of delivering mobility for employment purposes it is less effective than a system which allows for an allocation rather than an exchange - such as the 1990's style National Mobility / Homes Mobility scheme where providers would consider awarding a level of priority to those moving to an area to take up employment.

Secure tenants may not want to exchange with others who have affordable rents/fixed term tenancies? Of those that do it is likely that only those in receipt of welfare benefits will want to move to a property with a higher affordable rent.

Question 24: As a tenant, this national scheme will increase the number of possible matches you might find through your web-based provider but what other services might you find helpful in arranging your mutual exchange as well as IT-based access?

People moving to an area may well find themselves unable to find social rented housing in the area where they have found a job. Two things contribute to this:

- the need to move quickly prevents people accessing most forms of tenure other than private rented sector
- to arrange an exchange relies on finding someone to move the other way.

A better solution to this issue would be a requirement for all local authorities to provide a percentage of their stock for people moving to the area for work.

Question 25: As a local authority how would you expect to use the new flexibility provided by this change to the homelessness legislation?

Discharge of homelessness obligations by securing offers within the private sector is welcomed provided there can be safeguards around property standards, tenure length, rent levels, and the possibility of tenure extensions.

Security of tenure is essential for clients that have suffered the trauma of homelessness.

Question 26: As a local authority, do you think there will be private rented sector housing available in your area that could provide suitable and affordable accommodation for people owed the main homelessness duty?

There is a substantial Private Landlords' Association within Gateshead where suitable properties can be accessed. However private landlords are reluctant to take on clients who have a poor tenancy history and applicants are subject to "vetting".

It would be beneficial for general common terms or guidance to be set by central government; this would perhaps include minimum tenancy term and maximum rental rate based on areas averages.

There is a real issue here of how to increase the supply of privately rented properties and what incentive they would need to make their properties available to the authority. However private landlords are likely to be more interested in this sector than in those tenants who drift into the sector by default having lost a social tenancy due to behaviour/arrears etc. It is these vulnerable tenants who are difficult to rehouse and the area in which support and incentives are increasingly needed.

Question 27: Do you consider that 12 months is the right period to provide as a minimum fixed term where the homelessness duty is ended with an offer of an assured shorthold tenancy? If you consider the period should be longer, do you consider that private landlords would be prepared to provide fixed term assured shorthold tenancies for that longer period to new tenants?

There is a mixed view:

From a homeless prevention and sustainability angle the answer is, to avoid the 'revolving-door' for homeless households, the minimum fixed term in the private sector should be more than 12 months. Also there should be a level playing field for applicants. Their security of tenure should not depend upon within which sector they reside. The PRS may be reluctant to accept a longer minimum tenancy but we need to ensure that we protect the vulnerable

There needs to be some parity between this and the proposed flexible tenancies otherwise there would be a potential for increased homelessness but also a lack of stability within families and communities.

However from a private sector prospective the view is that it is the right length to ensure “buy-in” from the landlords. It is not always the case that tenants would still want to move out after 12 months in a private tenancy. The new proposals suggest that social housing will no longer be perceived by all as a tenancy for life: If this is the case then social housing may be a less attractive offer due to the reduction in security of tenure.

Question 28: What powers do local authorities and landlords need to address overcrowding?

Overcrowding and under occupation are closely linked and there needs to be reasonable preference to be given for those under occupying properties within the legislation.

Question 29: Is the framework set out in the 1985 Housing Act fit for purpose? Are any detailed changes needed to the enforcement provisions in the 1985 Act?

It would make sense that following the introduction of HHSRS that this becomes the single foundation for tackling overcrowding. See below.

Question 30: Should the Housing Health and Safety Rating System provide the foundation for measures to tackle overcrowding across all tenures and landlords?

This should provide the foundation for tackling overcrowding. However the provisions within guidance needs to be reinforced, perhaps to incorporate some of the specific inclusions within the Housing Act 1985 related to space and numbers of persons and updated to discount living areas. There is some concern that the evidence for production of the averages within the guidance is weak, resulting in low likelihoods. Perhaps this needs to be further examined to ensure LAs can effectively use this provision to tackle overcrowding.



Report to the Board

20 January 2011

Title: Decent Homes backlog Funding for Council Landlords 2011/15 – Invitation to bid

Report of: Chief Executive

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the board of a bid for decent homes funding submitted to the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA).

Background

2. On 11 November 2010 the HCA published on behalf of its self and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) proposals for decent homes backlog funding for council landlords for the period 2011 – 2015.
3. In December 2010 the HCA issued an invitation to council landlords to apply for decent homes backlog funding. The time scale for bidding is:
 - Invitation to council landlords to apply for funding by HCA - 13 December 2010
 - Deadline for submission of completed bid pro forma - 11 January 2011
 - Allocation of backlog funding - January / February 2011

Access to Funding

4. In the document the HCA indicated an expectation that funding would not normally be available to a landlord with less than 10% of non decent stock.
5. The HCA have suggested that where an authority holds a backlog of less than 10% the freedoms and additional resources introduced by HRA reform will in most cases, be sufficient to enable an authority to deliver the necessary works to its stock.
6. However, within the bidding document the HCA has left room for landlords to bid for funding where there is less than 10% non-decency but where for example the decent homes work required by the residual non-decent stock is challenging or that the self financing position will not support completion of the works.

7. The details of the self financing housing revenue account are not yet known and it is impossible therefore to predict if there will be sufficient resources to complete the decent homes programme.
8. The HCA has indicated that landlords will be able to revise bids for the latter part of 2011 – 15 should self financing offer limited scope for tackling the residual backlog. They have indicated that landlords should not make arguments for funding the last 10% of non-decency based on assumed self-financing shortfalls, but work with them once full details of the self financing settlement is clear.
9. Following discussions with the HCA a bid has been submitted by the Company on behalf of the council for decent homes backlog funding focusing on difficult to heat properties where significant additional funding is at risk if associated decent homes works are not completed.
10. There are two elements to the bid:
 - Works to non traditional properties in the south of the borough. A bid for £2.2 million has been submitted. If successful this will secure up to £880,000 additional funds to install insulated external rendering.
 - Installation of a central heating distribution system to individual properties in a multi-storey block. For a modest £252,000 decent homes allocation over £500,000 additional funding will be secured and will enable a combined heat and power system to be installed in the block.

The total bid for £2,452,000 with £2,200,000 being requested for 2011/12 and the remainder in 2012/13.

Links to Values

11. This report relates to the company value of being customer focused, innovative and committed.

Impact on Tenants

12. The works proposed will improve tenants comfort in their homes and reduce the incidence of fuel poverty.

Risk Management

13. Failure to attract sufficient resources has been identified as a strategic risk.

Financial Implications

14. Should the bid be successful, the additional resources would help towards completing the decent homes programme.

Equality and Diversity Implications

15. The bid is focused on those properties where tenants are more likely to suffer from fuel poverty.

Value for Money Implications

16. Should the bid be successful additional funding of over £1.3 million will be secured.

Health Implications

17. The bid is focused on properties which are hard to heat. The proposed works will help to reduce heating bills and reduce the incidence of cold related illnesses.

Environmental Implications

18. The works proposed will result in a reduction of carbon emissions.

Consultation Carried Out

19. Consultation with the HCA was carried out in relation to this bid. Consultation was also carried out with relevant officers in the council and the housing portfolio holder.

Recommendations

20. The board is asked to:
 - (i) note the submission of the bid;
 - (ii) request a further report once the outcome of the bid is known.

Report to the Board

20 January 2010



Title: Fees and Charges

Report of: Director of Finance

Purpose of report

1. To inform the Board of increases to fees and charges agreed by Gateshead Council that affect tenants and other residents.

Background

2. The Council, in common with many organisations, is facing a period of severe economic constraint and it has been necessary to review the fees and charges for the services it provides. The fees and charges are usually increased in April each year, in line with the financial year of the Council.
3. Alongside the increase to the VAT rate in January 2011, the Council reviewed whether any of the fees and charges could be increased early to save on the administration costs associated with the annual rise and the administration costs associated with the change in VAT.
4. This affects a number of fees and charges paid by residents and users of Gateshead Council services. However, it also specifically impacts on some of the services used by tenants and residents.
5. A copy of the report to the Council on 9 December 2010 approving all their fees and charges is attached at Appendix 1 to this report. A copy of the report to Cabinet on 7 December 2010 providing an update on the outcome of the consultation on fees and charges is attached at Appendix 2 to this report.

Fees and Charges

6. The following charges which affect our tenants and other residents were increased on 4 January 2011, however, there will be no further increase on these fees and charges in April 2011.
7. Garage Rents - Garage rent charges cover the cost of providing maintenance and management services to garages across the Borough:-

Garages	Original Charges per week	Amended Charges per week	Notes
Brick Garage, Council	3.64	5.00	No VAT added
Brick Garage, Private	5.53	7.03	Plus VAT = £8.43
Wooden Garage	1.22	2.72	Plus VAT if let to private residents = £3.26
Commercial Use	7.69	9.19	Plus VAT = £11.03
Commercial Storage	13.85	15.35	Plus VAT = £18.42
Parking Bays	14.90 per year	16.40 per year	Plus VAT if let to private residents = £19.68

8. Outside Use of Communal Lounges – This is in relation to the use of communal lounges by outside bodies:-

Outside Use of Communal Lounges	Original Charges	Amended Charges	Notes
Up to 1 hour	5.47	6.47	Exempt from VAT
Up to 2 hours	10.91	11.91	Exempt from VAT
1 Session (2-4 hours)	17.34	18.34	Exempt from VAT
2 Sessions	32.73	33.73	Exempt from VAT
3 Sessions	45.75	46.75	Exempt from VAT

9. Use of Sheltered Housing (APU) Guest Rooms – This is in relation to the guests of sheltered housing tenants paying to stay in the guest room within the scheme:-

Use of APU Guest Rooms	Original Charges	Amended Charges	Notes
No En-suite amenities			
Single	5.62 per night	6.62 per night	Plus VAT = £7.94
Couple	6.54 per night	7.54 per night	Plus VAT = £9.05
Partial En-suite			
Single	7.21 per night	8.21 per night	Plus VAT = £9.85
Couple	7.68 per night	8.68 per night	Plus VAT = £10.42
Full En-suite			
Single	8.35 per night	9.35 per night	Plus VAT = £11.22
Couple	9.30 per night	10.3 per night	Plus VAT = £12.36

10. The company wrote to all garage tenants during the week commencing 20 December 2010 notifying them of the increased rent charges.

11. The company has received a significant number of enquiries and complaints from garage tenants, Councillors and MP's expressing concern over the increase in the garage rents. The Council have produced a standard response to the increased costs which will be disseminated to those querying the charges. They have also requested information on the level of enquiries and complaints and these will be collated by the Finance Department on behalf of the Council.

Link to Values

12. This report relates to the following company value of being honest, accountable and transparent.

Risk Management Implications

13. The risks associated with the impact on demand for services have been assessed by the Council when considering increases in fees and charges.

Value for Money Implications

14. There are no value for money implications directly arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

15. There are no equality and diversity implications directly arising from this report.

Financial Implications

16. The financial implications are detailed in paragraphs 7 to 9 of this report.

Health Implications

17. There are no health implications directly arising from this report.

Environmental Implications

18. There are no environmental implications directly arising from this report.

Consultation carried out

19. It was not necessary to carry out any consultation when compiling this report.

Impact on Customers

20. The increases in fees and charges will have an impact on tenant and residents affected by the increases.

Recommendation

21. The Board is asked to note the increases to fees and charges agreed by Gateshead Council that affect our tenants and other residents.



Appendix 1

COUNCIL MEETING

9 December 2010

FEES AND CHARGES 2011/12

Roger Kelly, Chief Executive

Mike Barker, Strategic Director, Legal and Corporate Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report asks Council to approve detailed fees and charges and Fees and Charges Policy Framework.
2. A review of fees and charges is an integral part of the annual Policy and Service Planning Cycle. It is normal practice for the Council to set the standard increase for the annual review of fees and charges from 1 April each year in line with the movement in the RPI for the preceding year.
3. A set of principles to underpin a Fees and Charges Policy Framework has been developed, which sets the context within which fees and charges are to be established and reviewed and how fees and charges can support the delivery of Council priorities.
4. The Cabinet has considered the facts and issues arising from the report including alternative options and took all relevant advice before formulating their recommendation.
5. It was agreed that the recommendations in the report be approved, subject to a further report being presented to a special meeting of the Cabinet on 7 December 2010 that would provide an update on consultation feedback on fees and charges.

RECOMMENDATIONS

6. It is recommended that subject to the decision of the Cabinet on 7 December, Council:
 - i) approve the detailed fees and charges set out in Appendix 2
 - ii) approve the Fees and Charges Policy Framework as set out in Appendix 3
 - iii) Authorise the Strategic Director, Finance and ICT to amend statutory charges and those tied to service level agreements or charged annually with effect from 1 April 2011

TITLE OF REPORT: Fees and Charges 2011/12

REPORT OF: Derek Coates, Strategic Director, Finance and ICT

Purpose of the Report

1. A review of fees and charges is an integral part of the annual Policy and Service Planning Cycle. The purpose of this report is to set the level of fees and charges to coincide with the increase of VAT with effect from 4 January 2011.

Background

2. The Council currently raises in the region of £38m per annum from fees and charges, excluding housing rents.
3. It is normal practice for the Council to set the standard increase for the annual review of fees and charges from 1 April each year in line with the movement in the RPI for the preceding year. In the budget of 22 June 2010, the Chancellor announced that the standard rate of VAT will rise from 17.5% to 20% from 4 January 2011. In view of this, it was considered more cost effective to bring forward the annual review from April 2011 to January 2011 and combine it with the VAT increase.
4. In addition, a set of principles to underpin a Fees and Charges Policy Framework has been developed. This policy framework, shown in Appendix 3, sets the context within which fees and charges are to be established and reviewed and how fees and charges can support the delivery of Council priorities.

Proposal

5. The Trading Services Fit For Future work stream embarked on an exercise requesting groups and services to conduct a review of all existing fees and charges with a view to instigating a 10% net increase effective from 4 January 2011, the 10% target being aligned to that required for Fit For Future Operational reviews.
6. For the purposes of the review a traffic light system was adopted with “red” representing no scope for an increase, (e.g. statutory charge levels, tied to a Service Level Agreement, full cost already recovered or high demand elasticity), “amber” representing some scope for increase although by less than 10%, (usually determined by market forces/ability to pay or already reflecting full cost recovery) and “green” representing those fees and charges where a 10% increase is deemed possible.
7. Fees and charges related to Adult Social Care are being addressed using a different methodology given their complexity, requirements for more extensive consultation and their linkage to the Single Charging Policy. This will be the subject of a further Cabinet report.

8. The review has identified approximately £0.749m additional fees and charges income of which, some £0.144m could be realised in 2010/2011 with effect from 4 January 2011. In addition, a further £0.249m of additional fees and charges has been identified for the Housing Revenue Account, of which, £0.062m could be realised in 2010/2011. These figures are based on assumptions made by service management on the level of demand for services in relation to increases in the charge and VAT where applicable.
9. The scope for increasing in-year prices with effect from 4 January 2011 was inhibited by a large number of charges being of a statutory nature, tied to service level agreements or charged annually and therefore unable to be increased until 1 April 2011.
10. The Fees and Charges Review has been incorporated into the Budget Consultation Exercise which commenced on 15 November 2010 and concludes on 24 December 2010. However, in order to achieve an implementation date of 4 January 2011, a decision on the proposed increases will be needed before the end of the budget consultation period.

Recommendations

11. Cabinet is requested to recommend Council to agree the following:
 - (i) Approve the detailed fees and charges as set out in Appendix 2;
 - (ii) Approve the Fees and Charges Policy Framework as set out in Appendix 3;
 - (iii) Authorise the Strategic Director, Finance and ICT to amend statutory charges and those tied to service level agreements or charged annually with effect from 1 April 2011.

For the following reason:

- To ensure that fees and charges are set in accordance with an agreed set of charging principles.

Policy Context

1. The proposals in this report are consistent with the Council's vision and medium term objectives as set out in Vision 2030 and the Corporate Plan, in particular Ensuring a Sustainable Gateshead by ensuring best use of resources to deliver value for money services and long-term financial sustainability.
2. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) includes the following principles in respect of fees and charges:
 - The Council will use the service planning process to review its level of fees and charges annually to ensure they are set at an appropriate level in line with the delivery of Vision 2030 and take into account comparative levels of charge and ability to pay. The Fees and Charges Policy will underpin this principle.
 - The Council will consider ways in which it can maximise its powers of well-being including the consideration of trading opportunities and new charges to maximise income to deliver priorities.

In addition, it outlines that:

- The Council earns about £38m from fees and charges. Many of these are still relatively low in some areas compared to neighbouring authorities. To ensure that the Council maintains essential services and is able to deliver Vision 2030, a Fees and Charges Policy has been developed based on agreed set of principles and all existing fees and charges have been reviewed.
- Groups and Services also need to explore the potential for new fees and charges for discretionary services afforded to the Council under its trading and charging powers to support the delivery of the Council's priorities.

Background

3. As outlined in the MTFS, many fees and charges within Gateshead are relatively low in some areas compared to neighbouring authorities. Benchmarking, using the Audit Commission's Value For Money profiles against the Council's family grouping suggests bottom quartile performance in raising income from sales, fees and charges, providing scope to raise additional income from this source.
4. There are five categories of services for which charges can be made:
 - Statutory services delivered and charged for locally but where charges are set centrally e.g. planning applications and some licence fees.
 - Statutory services delivered locally where charges are determined by councils themselves e.g. car parking and some social care charges.
 - Discretionary services delivered and charged for at councils' discretion, but limited to full cost recovery e.g. leisure services.

- Discretionary services currently provided but not charged for, which could have charges introduced again limited to full cost recovery.
 - Opportunities to deliver new discretionary services, again charged at councils' discretion and limited to full cost recovery.
5. It is normal practice for the Council to set the standard increase for the annual review of fees and charges from 1 April each year in line with the movement in the RPI for the preceding year. In the budget of 22 June 2010, the Chancellor announced that the standard rate of VAT will rise from 17.5% to 20% from 4 January 2011. In view of this, it was considered more cost effective to bring forward the annual review from April 2011 to January 2011 and combine it with the VAT increase.
 6. A policy framework has been developed to set the context within which fees and charges are to be established and reviewed and how fees and charges can support the delivery of Council priorities.

Consultation

7. The Council's budget proposals are currently subject to consultation with all Councillors, Trades Unions, Chamber of Commerce and local residents. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Vitality and Sustainable Communities has been consulted.

Alternative Options

8. There are no alternative options proposed.

Implications of Recommended Option

9. **Financial Implications** - The financial implications are detailed in the attached appendices and included in individual service budgets.
10. **Risk Management Implications** - The risks associated with the impact on demand for services have been assessed when considering increases in fees and charges.
11. **Human Resources Implications** - Nil
12. **Equality and Diversity Implications** - These are reflected in the proposed fees and charges, which also consider the individual's ability to pay.
13. **Crime and Disorder Implications** - Nil
14. **Sustainability Implications** – Nil
15. **Health Implications** - Nil
16. **Human Rights Implications** - Nil
17. **Area and Ward Implications** - All

REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES 2011/2012

COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES
HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

SERVICES	VAT	CURRENT CHARGE	PROPOSED CHARGE	REMARKS
<u>WARWICK COURT</u>				
District Heating	O/S	£3.47 per week	£3.47 per week	
Bed-sit	O/S	£5.10 per week	£5.10 per week	
One Bed Flat	O/S	£6.83 per week	£6.83 per week	
Two Bed Flat	O/S	£7.80 per week	£7.80 per week	
Three Bed Flat	O/S	£12.98 per week	£12.98 per week	
Three/four Sharing Flat				
Communal Facilities				
Bed-sit	O/S	£2.97 per week	£2.97 per week	
One Bed Flat	O/S	£4.47 per week	£4.47 per week	
Two Bed Flat	O/S	£5.92 per week	£5.92 per week	
Three Bed Flat	O/S	£7.43 per week	£7.43 per week	
Three/four Sharing Flat				
Furnishings				
Bed-sit	O/S	£7.22 per week	£7.22 per week	
One Bed Flat	O/S	£9.11 per week	£9.11 per week	
Two Bed Flat	O/S	£11.27 per week	£11.27 per week	
Three Bed Flat	O/S	£12.90 per week	£12.90 per week	
<u>EAST ST FLATS</u>				
Heating & Hot Water				
Bed-sit	O/S	£6.09 per week	£6.09 per week	
One Bed Flat	O/S	£7.74 per week	£7.74 per week	
Two Bed Flat	O/S	£9.26 per week	£9.26 per week	
Three Bed Flat	O/S	£10.87 per week	£10.87 per week	
<u>AGES PERSON UNIT</u>				
Heating				
Units with communal areas & heating charge				
Existing Tenants				
Bed-sit	O/S	£7.02 per week	£7.02 per week	
Flat	O/S	£9.88 per week	£9.88 per week	
Warden	O/S	£11.11 per week	£11.11 per week	
All Tenants	O/S	£1.22 per week	£1.22 per week	
New Tenants from 1 April 2005				
Bed-sit	O/S	£7.02 per week	£7.02 per week	
Flat	O/S	£9.88 per week	£9.88 per week	
Warden	O/S	£11.11 per week	£11.11 per week	
All Tenants	O/S	£1.22 per week	£1.22 per week	
Units with communal areas & no heating charge				
Existing Tenants				
Bed-sit	O/S	£1.17 per week	£1.17 per week	
New Tenants from 1 April 2005	O/S	£1.17 per week	£1.17 per week	

SERVICES	VAT	CURRENT CHARGE	PROPOSED CHARGE	REMARKS
Cleaning of communal areas				
Units with Communal Area and a Heating Charge				
Existing Tenants	O/S	£2.74 per week	£2.74 per week	
New Tenants from 1 April 2005	O/S	£4.13 per week	£4.13 per week	
Units with Communal Area no Heating Charge				
Existing Tenants	O/S	£0.69 per week	£0.69 per week	
New Tenants from 1 April 2005	O/S	£0.69 per week	£0.69 per week	
<u>ELECTRICITY CHARGES - VARIOUS</u>				
Tenants	O/S	£4.04 per week	£4.04 per week	
Wardens	O/S	£8.12 per week	£8.12 per week	
Communal Electric	O/S	£1.47 per week	£1.47 per week	
Warden Service				
Existing Tenants	O/S	£1.48 per week	£1.48 per week	
New Tenants from 1 April 2005	O/S	£11.38 per week	£11.38 per week	
Mobile Warden Service (New Tenants from 1 April 05)	O/S	£0.99 per week	£0.99 per week	
Communal Lounge	O/S	£1.48 per week	£1.48 per week	
Cleaning Services				
Chandless, Maisonettes & 3 story flats				
Existing Tenants	O/S	£1.38 per week	£1.38 per week	
New Tenants from 1 April 2005	O/S	£2.12 per week	£2.12 per week	
Units with a mobile cleaner				
Existing Tenants	O/S	£0.76 per week	£0.76 per week	
New Tenants from 1 April 2005	O/S	£0.85 per week	£0.85 per week	
Dispersed Homeless Units				
Heat & light				
Sharing Bed-sit (each)	O/S	£12.49 per week	£12.49 per week	
Two Bed Flat	O/S	£22.47 per week	£22.47 per week	
Three Bed Flat	O/S	£24.97 per week	£24.97 per week	
Furnishings				
Sharing Bed-sit (each)	O/S	£15.83 per week	£15.83 per week	
Two Bed Flat	O/S	£28.48 per week	£28.48 per week	
Three Bed Flat	O/S	£31.63 per week	£31.63 per week	
Warden Charge				
Sharing Bed-sit (each)	O/S	£66.82 per week	£66.82 per week	
Flat	O/S	£66.82 per week	£66.82 per week	
Laundry Charge				
Sharing Bed-sit (each)	O/S	£7.80 per week	£7.80 per week	
Flat	O/S	£7.80 per week	£7.80 per week	
Cleaning Materials				
Sharing Bed-sit (each)	O/S	£4.66 per week	£4.66 per week	
Flat	O/S	£4.66 per week	£4.66 per week	

SERVICES	VAT	CURRENT CHARGE	PROPOSED CHARGE	REMARKS
<u>OUTSIDE USE OF COMMUNAL LOUNGES</u>				
Up to 1 hour	E	£5.47	£6.47	
Up to 2 hours	E	£10.91	£11.91	
1 Session (2-4 hours)	E	£17.34	£18.34	
2 Sessions	E	£32.73	£33.73	
3 Sessions	E	£45.75	£46.75	
<u>USE OF APU GUEST ROOMS</u>				
No En-suite amenities	S	£5.62 per night	£6.62 per night	
Single	S	£6.54 per night	£7.54 per night	
Couple				
Partial En-suite	S	£7.21 per night	£8.21 per night	
Single	S	£7.68 per night	£8.68 per night	
Couple				
Full En-suite	S	£8.35 per night	£9.35 per night	
Single	S	£9.30 per night	£10.30 per night	
Couple				
<u>FURNITURE CHARGES</u>				
Bed Sit (package)	O/S	£7.22 per week	£7.22 per week	
One Bed Flat (Furniture only)	S	£9.11 per week	£9.30 per week	
One Bed Flat (Package)	O/S	£13.14 per week	£13.14 per week	
Two Bed Flat (Package)	O/S	£19.57 per week	£19.57 per week	
Three Bed House (Package)	O/S	£26.14 per week	£26.14 per week	
Asylum - One Bed Flat	O/S	£25.26 per week	£25.26 per week	
Asylum - One Bed Flat	O/S	£32.23 per week	£32.23 per week	
<u>FURNITURE CHARGES (NEW TENANTS APRIL 2010)</u>				
Package Option 1	E	£14.84 per week	£14.84 per week	
Package Option 2	E	£21.04 per week	£21.04 per week	
Package Option 3	E	£27.23 per week	£27.23 per week	
Package Option 4	E	£33.40 per week	£33.40 per week	
Admin Charge	E	£2.50 per week	£2.50 per week	
<u>GARAGES</u>				
Brick Garages (Council)	S	£4.28 per week	£6.00 per week	
Brick Garages (Private)	S	£6.50 per week	£8.43 per week	
Wooden Garages	S	£1.43 per week	£3.26 per week	
Commercial Use	S	£9.04 per week	£11.03 per week	
Commercial Storage	S	£16.27 per week	£18.42 per week	
Parking Bays	S	£17.50 per year	£19.68 per year	
<u>MULTI STOREY FLATS</u>				
Concierge & cleaning				
Existing Tenants	O/S	£11.37 per week	£11.37 per week	
New Tenants from 1 April 2005	O/S	£3.19 per week	£3.19 per week	
Caretaking & cleaning				
Existing Tenants	O/S	£7.14 per week	£7.14 per week	
New Tenants from 1 April 2005	O/S	£7.21 per week	£7.21 per week	

SERVICES	VAT	CURRENT CHARGE	PROPOSED CHARGE	REMARKS
<u>OTHER HOUSING CHARGES</u>				
Community Care / Hardwired Alarms New Tenants from 1 April 2005	S*	£2.50 per week	£2.55 per week	
Dispersed Alarms / Lifelines	S**	£3.28 per week	£3.28 per week	
Legal Fees on Abstracts for Mortgage Advances	S	£63.47	£67.80	
Valuation Fees - up to £10,000	S	£74.05	£79.10	
£10,001 - £15,000	S	£87.27	£93.23	
Above £15,000	S	£108.43	£115.83	
Mortgage Questionnaire	S	£68.75	£73.44	
Rent References	S	£34.40	£36.75	
Gardening Scheme	S	£6.05	£6.05	

* Where installation of alarm is requested by tenant VAT is standard rated. If alarm is already built into property and part of rent or is part of care package VAT is outside the scope.

**Tenants with disabilities VAT is zero-rated.

Fees and Charges Policy Framework

1. Charging policies should support delivery of Vision 2030 and the three priorities of the Corporate Plan, namely Delivering Vision 2030 focusing on Economy, Environment and Health, Engaging Communities and Corporate Sustainability
2. The Council's rationale for charging is to improve community well-being, to ensure services are accessible and to maximise income to ensure that the Council maintains corporate sustainability. The Council aims to reduce the gap between the income it raises through sales, fees and charges and the average raised by similar local authorities.
3. Subsidies and concessions will be used to ensure that the Council improves community well being. Concessions should be awarded and reviewed in relation to each service. Where subsidy and concessions are applied there should be an evaluation process in place to measure levels of success in meeting these objectives. Definitions and qualifying criteria for concessionary target groups are consistent across the Council.
4. Revenue from fees and charges can be used by the Council to:
 - Provide or improve services.
 - Offset increases in Council Tax.
 - Fund specific projects.
5. The Council will charge for all services where it is appropriate and cost-effective to do so, unless there are contrary policies, legal or contractual reasons. The aim is to make optimal use of charges and establish the best price for each service.
6. When discretionary charges are set, the general aim shall be to cover the cost of the service and charge on a commercial basis where appropriate. Charges will reflect the full cost of provision, unless covered by subsidies / concessions designed to meet Council priorities or there are contrary policies or legal reasons (cost recovery is defined by the accountancy principles used by the Strategic Director of Finance & ICT).
7. Arrangements for charging and collecting fees should be efficient, practical and simple to understand by users. The reasons behind any significant changes to charges should be communicated to residents and service users.
8. Annual reviews will not be a simplistic addition of a flat rate inflation increase. Decisions about charging will be well informed, with a thorough understanding of delivering Vision 2030 and policy priorities

TITLE OF REPORT: Fees and Charges 2011/12 – Budget Consultation update

REPORT OF: Derek Coates, Strategic Director, Finance and ICT

Purpose of the Report

1. A review of fees and charges is an integral part of the annual Policy and Service Planning Cycle. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the outcome of the consultation on fees and charges.

Background

2. The Council currently raises in the region of £38m per annum from fees and charges, excluding housing rents.
3. It is normal practice for the Council to set the standard increase for the annual review of fees and charges from 1 April each year in line with the movement in the RPI for the preceding year. In the budget of 22 June 2010, the Chancellor announced that the standard rate of VAT will rise from 17.5% to 20% from 4 January 2011. In view of this, it was considered more cost effective to bring forward the annual review from April 2011 to January 2011 and combine it with the VAT increase.
4. The budget consultation includes a section on fees and charges and the results to date are reported.

Public consultation

5. Respondents were asked whether they would increase charges against eight service areas. A total of 290 people responded to the consultation.

Service	Amount this could raise	Chose to increase this charge	Percentage
Garage rentals on housing estates	£250,000	231	80%
Reservation and overdue charges in libraries	£6,500	211	73%
Business centres	£20,000	187	64%
Parking charges	£60,000	173	60%
Charges for ICT membership in libraries	£20,000	171	59%
Sport and leisure charges and concessions	£315,000	156	54%

Bulky household waste collection	£16,000	146	50%
Burials and cremations	£97,000	104	36%

6. The consultation shows that the majority of respondents elected to increase charges across most areas.
7. Comparing all areas shows that garage rentals is the most popular area for increasing charges, with burials and cremations the least popular.
8. Charges for burials and cremations have been in place for many years and have not seen any significant increase (i.e. not above inflation). A review of the charges was carried out in 2004 and charges were increased above inflation that year to bring them into line with neighbouring Council service charges. At present, overall, charges are now below those of neighbouring Councils.
9. The Council undertakes 1,800 cremations and 550 burials (including cremated remains) per year and in recent years, a range of improvements have been made to the services including:
 - Refurbished Saltwell crematorium
 - Refurbished memorial grounds
 - New wall and plaque arrangements
 - New state of art music system in both crematoria
 - Refurbished Chapel, fountain and grounds in Saltwell
 - Pathways and access improvements in cemeteries

Other consultees

10. Councillors have also responded to the consultation. The question of an increase in bulky household waste collection charges was raised in relation to the potential impact that this might have on fly tipping.
11. Charges for large collections of DIY waste, house and garden clearances were introduced in 2006/07, with charges for the collection of all bulky household items that can't fit in the bin introduced in April 2008.
12. Fly tipping has decreased in recent years, with 3,264 incidents in 2009/10 compared to 21,051 in 2006/07, an 84% decrease.

Recommendations

13. Cabinet is requested to recommend Council to agree the following:
- (i) Approve the detailed fees and charges as set out in Appendix 2;
 - (ii) Approve the Fees and Charges Policy Framework as set out in Appendix 3;
 - (iii) Authorise the Strategic Director, Finance and ICT to amend statutory charges and those tied to service level agreements or charged annually with effect from 1 April 2011.

For the following reason:

- To ensure that fees and charges are set in accordance with an agreed set of charging principles.

Policy Context

1. The proposals in this report are consistent with the Council's vision and medium term objectives as set out in Vision 2030 and the Corporate Plan, in particular Ensuring a Sustainable Gateshead by ensuring best use of resources to deliver value for money services and long-term financial sustainability.
2. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) includes the following principles in respect of fees and charges:
 - The Council will use the service planning process to review its level of fees and charges annually to ensure they are set at an appropriate level in line with the delivery of Vision 2030 and take into account comparative levels of charge and ability to pay. The Fees and Charges Policy will underpin this principle.
 - The Council will consider ways in which it can maximise its powers of well-being including the consideration of trading opportunities and new charges to maximise income to deliver priorities.

In addition, it outlines that:

- The Council earns about £38m from fees and charges. Many of these are still relatively low in some areas compared to neighbouring authorities. To ensure that the Council maintains essential services and is able to deliver Vision 2030, a Fees and Charges Policy has been developed based on agreed set of principles and all existing fees and charges have been reviewed.
- Groups and Services also need to explore the potential for new fees and charges for discretionary services afforded to the Council under its trading and charging powers to support the delivery of the Council's priorities.

Background

3. As outlined in the MTFS, many fees and charges within Gateshead are relatively low in some areas compared to neighbouring authorities. Benchmarking, using the Audit Commission's Value For Money profiles against the Council's family grouping suggests bottom quartile performance in raising income from sales, fees and charges, providing scope to raise additional income from this source.
4. There are five categories of services for which charges can be made:
 - Statutory services delivered and charged for locally but where charges are set centrally e.g. planning applications and some licence fees.
 - Statutory services delivered locally where charges are determined by councils themselves e.g. car parking and some social care charges.
 - Discretionary services delivered and charged for at councils' discretion, but limited to full cost recovery e.g. leisure services.

- Discretionary services currently provided but not charged for, which could have charges introduced again limited to full cost recovery.
 - Opportunities to deliver new discretionary services, again charged at councils' discretion and limited to full cost recovery.
5. It is normal practice for the Council to set the standard increase for the annual review of fees and charges from 1 April each year in line with the movement in the RPI for the preceding year. In the budget of 22 June 2010, the Chancellor announced that the standard rate of VAT will rise from 17.5% to 20% from 4 January 2011. In view of this, it was considered more cost effective to bring forward the annual review from April 2011 to January 2011 and combine it with the VAT increase.
 6. A policy framework has been developed to set the context within which fees and charges are to be established and reviewed and how fees and charges can support the delivery of Council priorities.

Consultation

7. The Council's budget proposals are currently subject to consultation with all Councillors, Trades Unions, Chamber of Commerce and local residents. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Vitality and Sustainable Communities has been consulted.

Alternative Options

8. There are no alternative options proposed.

Implications of Recommended Option

9. **Financial Implications** - The financial implications are detailed in the attached appendices and included in individual service budgets.
10. **Risk Management Implications** - The risks associated with the impact on demand for services have been assessed when considering increases in fees and charges.
11. **Human Resources Implications** - Nil
12. **Equality and Diversity Implications** - These are reflected in the proposed fees and charges, which also consider the individual's ability to pay.
13. **Crime and Disorder Implications** - Nil
14. **Sustainability Implications** – Nil
15. **Health Implications** - Nil
16. **Human Rights Implications** - Nil
17. **Area and Ward Implications** - All

Report to the Board

20 January 2011



Title: Severe Weather – December 2010

Report of: Chief Executive

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Board how the company and Morrison Facilities Services responded to the recent severe winter weather.

Background

2. As part of the general investment programme any boilers which require replacement are replaced where possible with a highly energy efficient condensing combination boiler. This follows Government policy and is an integral part of the drive to cut energy emissions.
3. In Britain there are around eight million condensing boilers installed, and in Gateshead 12,291 properties have a condensing boiler.
4. A key element of these boilers is a condensate pipe which is part of the flue system and expels condensate fluid and flue gases. Therefore, it must be sealed throughout its entire length and terminate to an external source.

The impact of the severe weather

5. If the condensate freezes due to low external temperatures, this will result in the boiler shutting down. From 2005 to 2009 there were no reported problems with the condensate freezing. With normal average winter temperatures the boilers will continue to operate.
6. In early 2010 there were two occasions when the external temperature was so low that the condensate in some boilers froze. Around 10% of condensing boilers required attention.
7. The very cold weather in late November 2010 continued throughout December with frequent snow falls across the North East. This was compounded by sub-zero temperatures over long periods throughout the day and night.
8. The Meteorological office reported that December 2010 was the coldest period in the last one hundred years. Heavy snowfalls throughout the first and third weeks of the month caused chaos to the road network throughout the north east. With

temperatures dropping to -10°C , overnight gritting proved to be ineffective, with many estates being isolated for long periods of time.

9. This severe weather, over a long period caused some heating systems across the borough to stop working.
10. Over this period British Gas received more than double its normal calls and due to the high volume of repairs its engineers had to start carrying electric fan heaters (this is standard practice with TGHC/Morrison's) as a temporary heat source. With call volumes so high many service providers and boiler manufactures had to shut down their contact centres to enable them to process jobs and action repairs.
11. It also became apparent during the latter part of the period that mains water supply pipes were freezing up and that the water supply company was unable to respond.

Service Response

12. The severe weather conditions had a massive impact on the service over this period with both call volumes and repair requests far exceeding those of previous years.
13. The repairs reporting service received over 17,920 calls during December 2010, compared to 10,440 in December 2009. In the week leading up to Christmas, over 6580 calls were received. In order to cope with this increase in volume additional resources were drafted in to ensure that all phone lines were staffed. Throughout this period the repairs reporting centre remained operating without having to shut down for any length of time due to call volumes or workload. Repairs reporting staff ensured that constant communication was kept up with their Morrison's counterparts to maintain the highest levels of service delivery in very difficult circumstances.
14. In December Morrisons received 3973 emergency orders compared with 2181 in December 2009 and 1934 in December 2008 (see Appendix 1). Due to the heavy snow falls and sub zero temperatures driving conditions became very difficult and dangerous with frequent warnings being given out for people not to travel. To ensure that emergencies could be carried out and to make sure Morrisons maintained its duty of care to its operatives, trades were paired up to make sure that if there was any problem whilst attending a job there would be two operatives to deal with it. For example where their vehicle became snowed in.
15. Other trades were paired up to ensure that temporary heating could be delivered in advance of an engineer to re-commission the boiler or carry out the necessary repair.
16. Morrison's operational team worked with their stores management to resource an additional supply of temporary heaters and a large supply of bottled water. The stores also made provision to have a stores facility available on a 24 hour basis over this period. Over 950 temporary heaters were delivered to tenants during December along with 248 litres of bottled water.

17. As conditions deteriorated, additional resources were added to the call out rota. Service hours were increased to cope with the high demand, originally extended to 20.00 hours and then extended to 22.00 hours in the Christmas week.
18. To ensure that any emergencies or matters that required escalating both TGHC and Morrisons operational managers and senior managers were on-call over this period to make sure that any issues or problems could be dealt with without delay.
19. The following actions were taken jointly by TGHC and Morrisons over the period to ensure that we responded appropriately.
 - Early morning operations meeting between TGHC/Morrisons to assess potential workloads, impact on call out and forecasted daily weather conditions.
 - Agree job status (eg emergencies only) for that day and update information on TGHC website / phone message.
 - Arrange additional resources for call centre as appropriate
 - Re-direct Morrison's resources to accommodate service provision, to include gas servicing team, voids and capital works team.
 - Access emergency stores provision (temp heaters/bottled water).
 - Assess resource requirements for extended service hours.
 - Access potential additional resources for call out.
 - Introduced a 24 hour stores facility.

Service Improvements Actions

20. The period of severe weather early in 2010 was assumed to be a once in a lifetime occurrence, however weather experts are now predicting that similar conditions could happen more often.
21. Following the early 2010 severe weather, a number of condensate pipes were replaced with a larger bore pipe which does not freeze as readily. However evidence from the December 2010 period would suggest that even these larger bore condensate pipes did not prevent the condensate from freezing in all cases.
22. With the weather experts predicting that our winters will be getting harsher over the next few years a pro-active approach to the way in which we provide a service to our customers is essential.

Analysis of Repairs

23. Following this period of severe weather, our gas team have analysed repair requests in order to identify any particular issues. This has found that:
 - All condensing boiler types were similarly affected, with Worcester boilers performing worst.
 - Around 20% of all condensing boilers required some attention.
 - A large percentage of the frozen condensate pipes were in rural areas.
 - The frozen condensate pipes, were installed to the manufacturers instructions.
 - Oversized condensate pipes were also freezing.
 - Lagged condensate pipes still froze.

- Oversized and lagged condensate pipes were still freezing.

Proposals

24. With our knowledge of the past two winter periods we have looked at the options that will assist both TGHC and Morrisons working in partnership to give customers the best possible service when conditions get as harsh as those we have just been through.

It is proposed that:

- We develop a Winter Escalation Plan which will contain a step by step guide to what operations should be introduced when the area is under threat from a severe weather warning. It would contain details for reporting and updating the various managers and team members, it would also highlight lines of communication that would automatically trigger pre-arranged operational changes in respect of resources and stores provision.
 - We continue to work with Morrisons on the diagnostic scripts used by the repairs reporting staff when assisting customers. By making continuous improvements and using examples of best practice within the sector we can improve the way we access the problem and in some cases will be able to assist the customers to rectify some faults within one call.
 - We look at options to improve the issues around condensate pipes. The gas team are already investigating possible options to improve the situation for existing boilers for the future including:
 - re-install all external condensate pipes to an internal trap waste
 - all new boiler installations should have condensate pipe runs internally
 - where installing pipes internally is a problem a pump could be installed to ensure the condensate continues to flow
 - priority of boiler position and condensate pipe should override kitchen design
 - We seek a solution for any new boilers to be fitted in discussion with the boiler manufacturers.
 - Morrisons will look into the options regarding the addition of 4x4 vehicles to the fleet and thus improving the capability of the service to attend to some emergencies that the weather may render isolated to normal vehicles. (Morrisons have now added a 4x4 vehicle to the fleet to be used should the bad weather conditions return, there is also an ongoing exercise to access the potential of using vans with a 4x4 capacity.) Morrisons are also looking into the possibility of fitting winter tyres to the fleet over the period from November to February, this would again improve the capability of the workforce.
25. Clearly, the solution will not be cost free, and officers are assessing the financial implications of these solutions. However, this has to be offset against the significant increase in repairs requests if the problem remains unresolved.
26. The Board may wish to consider provision within the capital budget for these works once the costs are known.

Other Issues

27. The significant snow falls also resulted in a number of gutters around the borough being dislodged, with over 700 properties affected. It will cost £300,000 to replace these gutters, and a programme of work is being devised. The cost of this work is covered by insurance.

Link to values

28. This report links to the company's values being customer focused, innovative and professional.

Impact on tenants

29. The impact on customers, whose heating was inoperative was considerable. The extension of service hours helped to reduce this impact. Implementing the proposed solutions will improve customer satisfaction with the service

Risk Management Implications

30. Agreeing a winter escalation plan will help to mitigate this operational risk.

Financial Implications

31. The cost of the boiler repair work will need to be met from the overall repairs budget and officers are assessing the financial implications of the proposals.
32. Budget provision will need to be made from within future capital programmes to install a long term solution.

Equality and Diversity Implications

33. As part of the daily analysis, vulnerable customers were prioritised for work.

Value for Money Implications

34. A long term solution to the freezing condensate pipe will deliver better value for money. Any costs associated with the proposals will reduce the impact on the repairs budget if the problem remained unresolved.

Health Implications

35. The targeted approach ensured that those customers vulnerable to cold related illnesses were prioritised.

Environmental Implications

36. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Consultation carried out

37. Advice to tenants was posted on the website and the 12,291 customers with condensing boilers were provided with an advice card giving practical tips on how they could tackle the problem (see Appendix 2).

Recommendation

38. The Board is asked to:
- (i) note the contents of this report.
 - (ii) request a further report on the detail of the proposed solutions and financial implications.

COMPLETED EMERGENCY ORDERS (October to December)				
	2008			
Trade	October	November	December	Total
Gas	247	701	850	1798
Plumbing	292	319	385	996
Electrical	223	292	378	893
Joinery	291	287	298	876
Others	22	27	23	72
Total	1075	1626	1934	4635
	2009			
Trade	October	November	December	Total
Gas	119	683	1139	1941
Plumbing	294	292	346	932
Electrical	225	345	362	932
Joinery	301	314	309	924
Others	41	34	25	100
Total	980	1668	2181	4829
	2010			
Trade	October	November	December	Total
Gas	106	897	2281	3284
Plumbing	199	285	625	1109
Electrical	202	341	778	1321
Joinery	254	231	246	731
Others	33	53	43	129
Total	794	1807	3973	6574

Important information about your condensing boiler.

In extremely cold weather you may experience heating issues, due to condensate pipes freezing.

These are the small plastic (often white) pipes that run beneath the boiler, usually to the outside of your home.

 **The Gateshead Housing Company**
Working with Gateshead Council

Should your heating go off, please check the following before contacting the housing company.

- 1 Is your gas supply on? Or if you have a pre-pay meter, is it topped up with credit?
- 2 If you feel able, use a warm pack (often used for sore joints), a hot water bottle or, only if you are on the ground floor, warm water over the plastic pipe to try to thaw it out
- 3 Take care that any excess water on the ground does not create a slip hazard. Boiling water should **never** be used
- 4 When the pipe has been fully thawed and drained try restarting the boiler.

If this doesn't work, or you are concerned about trying to thaw the pipe, call The Gateshead Housing Company's HomeRepairs service on **0800 408 6008**.

Northern mail



If undelivered return to The Gateshead Housing Company, Keelman House, Fifth Avenue Business Park, Team Valley Trading Estate, Gateshead, NE11 0XA

Other useful numbers

- For burst or frozen external pipes call Northumbrian Water on 0845 717 1100
- For gas leaks or emergencies call Transco on 0800 111 999.



Title: Petitions Update

Report of: Chief Executive

Purpose of report

1. To provide the Board of progress with petitions received since the last update at meeting of the Board on 23 September 2010.

Background

2. The Board agreed, at its meeting on 13 April 2006, a protocol for the handling of petitions received by the company.
3. The protocol requires that a quarterly progress report be submitted to the Board for information. Progress with outstanding petitions is detailed in the Appendix.

Link to Values

4. This report relates to the following company values: -
 - Being customer focused, innovative and professional.
 - Being honest, accountable and transparent,
 - Being a listening and learning organisation.

Risk Management Implications

5. There is a risk of impact on customer satisfaction if petitions are not handled effectively.

Value for Money Implications

6. There are no value for money implications directly arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

7. There are no equality and diversity implications directly arising from this report.

Financial Implications

8. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

Health Implications

9. Although there are no direct health implications as a result of this report, the successful handling of the petitions would have positive impact on the health and well being of Gateshead residents.

Environmental Implications

10. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Consultation carried out

11. The protocol for handling petitions received by the company requires that the Chief Executive or Strategic Employee will arrange for the ward Councillors to receive a copy of the petition and seek their views on the content. The Councillor who submitted the petition will also be consulted if he or she is not one of the ward Councillors.
12. The protocol also requires that it will be appropriate to undertake one or more of the following actions: -
 - holding a meeting with the (lead) petitioner/s and/or any other relevant parties, e.g. ward Councillors, the police, strategic partners;
 - holding a site visit;
 - carrying out a consultation exercise with tenants on the issues raised by the petition.

Impact on Customers

13. Depending upon the outcome of a petition submitted, there could be an impact on customer, for example a change in policy.

Recommendations

14. The views of the Board are sought on whether it is satisfied with: -
 - Progress with petitions received since the last update.
 - The impact on customers to date.



PETITIONS SUBMITTED TO THE GATESHEAD HOUSING COMPANY

Date received	Ref	From	Issue	Action to date
8 June 10	4/10	Residents of Wesley Court, Redmayne Court and Wellington Court Flats	Consideration of introducing a Local Lettings Plan	Meeting held with lead petitioner and another resident who were provided with an estate activity report. They agreed, given there was insufficient evidence to prove a LLP was needed, not to proceed. It was further agreed that the conversion works at SGTC along with other environmental works would address the issues. Ward councillors were consulted and agreed with the above solutions. This petition will be removed from the schedule
30 Sept 10	5/10	Petition received from residents of Dunston	To ask TGHC to reconsider letting a property to a certain family	The lead petitioner has been contacted and the issue has been investigated. There were no grounds to support a decision to withdraw the offer of the property. The lead petitioner, ward councillors and the family concerned have been updated. This petition will be removed from the schedule
15 Oct 10	6/10	Petition from residents a street in Gateshead	Anti-social behaviour of family living in area	The petitioners and ward members have been contacted and have been informed of how matters have been investigated with the support of the police. The alleged perpetrator is currently residing away from the area. Regular contact has been maintained with the complainants. There have been no further incidents to date. This petition will be removed from the schedule
19 Nov 10	7/10	Petition received from residents from Heworth	Replacement of roofs on houses as part of the Decent Homes Programme and plans for loft insulation on Boghouse Estate, Heworth	The lead petitioner and local ward councillors have been advised that the roofs on Boghouse Estate do not need replacing. The petitioner has been advised that WarmZone will visit every property once the decent homes work has been completed to determine whether loft and/or cavity wall insulation is required. This petition will be removed from the schedule



Report to the Board

20 January 2010

Title: Outstanding Issues

Report of: Chief Executive

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Board of outstanding issues for which it has requested further reports.

Background

2. From time to time, the Board requests further information at a later date on a particular issue it has considered.
3. In order for the company to be seen as being open and transparent, a quarterly report of any outstanding issues will be presented to the Board for information.
4. The report gives details of when the issue was considered by the Board and the date members can expect a further report.
5. A number of issues are also referred to the appropriate committee.

Outstanding Issues

6. The following issues are currently outstanding: -

Title	Date considered by Board / Committee	Report to Board / Committee
Articles of Association – Criteria for considering Board Member applications to be reappointed beyond the maximum term of office	May 2009	Amendments to Articles of Association have been agreed by Council – criteria to be drawn up
Committee Membership – Review effectiveness after one year of operation	November 2009	Task Group to be established to review effectiveness after one year of operation

Title	Date considered by Board / Committee	Report to Board / Committee
Review of Directors payments	21 January 2010	Following consideration by the Council's Independent Remuneration Panel
Financial Inclusion Strategy 2010-12	May 2010	First half yearly progress report to Customers and Communities Committee in January/February 2011
Children's Trust Board – Annual Report on how the company delivered against the Children's and Young Peoples Partnership	September 2010	September 2011
Risk Appetite Statement – Annual Review	September 2010	September 2011

Link to Values

7. This report relates to the company value of being honest, accountable and transparent.

Equality and Diversity Implications

8. Implications will be addressed separately in outstanding reports.

Financial Implications

9. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

Health Implications

10. Although there are no direct health implications as a result of this report, the successful implementation of recommendations in outstanding reports would have positive impact on the health and well being of Gateshead residents.

Impact on Customers

11. There was no impact on customers as a result of compiling this report.

Risk Management Implications

12. There are no risk management implications directly arising from this report.

Value for Money Implications

13. There are no value for money implications directly arising from this report.

Environmental Implications

14. There are no environmental implications directly arising from this report.

Consultation carried out

15. No consultation was necessary when compiling the information in this report.

Recommendation

16. The views of the Board are sought on progress with outstanding reports.

Report to the Board

20 January 2010



Title: Forward Plan

Report of: Chief Executive

Purpose of report

1. To approve a forward plan of reports which will be presented to the Board during the next year.

Background

2. There is currently no system in place to make the Board aware of reports it will receive at future meetings. It has also previously been agreed in the 2010 Governance Improvement Plan to have an annual plan of meetings with themed subject matters programmed in.
3. Attached as an Appendix to this report is a forward plan of reports that will be presented to meetings of the Board during the year. This will not be an exhaustive list of reports and there will clearly be a number of other items of business that the Board will be required to consider during the course of the next year. It will however give the Board an idea of forthcoming business. It will also assist officers when planning in business and meetings to avoid when there is a lot of business.
4. It is proposed that the forward plan becomes a standing item on every Board agenda.
5. In addition, the Annual Planning meeting takes place with the Board in February to inform the Delivery Plan.

Link to Values

6. This report relates to the following company value of being honest, accountable and transparent.

Risk Management Implications

7. The forward plan will mitigate the risk of reports not being planned into the Board cycle.

Value for Money Implications

8. There are no value for money implications directly arising from this report.

Equality and Diversity Implications

9. Equality and diversity implications will be addressed separately in future reports.

Financial Implications

10. There are no financial implications directly arising from this report.

Health Implications

11. There are no health implications directly arising from this report.

Environmental Implications

12. There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

Consultation carried out

13. Lead officers within the company have identified reports for future meetings of the Board.

Impact on Customers

14. There is no impact on customers as a result of compiling this report.

Recommendation

15. It is recommended that: -
 - the forward plan be noted;
 - the forward plan be a standing item on future Board agendas.

Board Forward Plan 2011

Board Meetings	Issues to be discussed
Thursday 10 March 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2011/12 Budget • Capital Budget 2011/12 • Review of Directors' Expenses Scheme • Board Appraisal • Strategic Risk Register • Performance – 3rd Quarter 2010/11
Thursday 12 May 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery Plan 2011/12 • Annual General Meeting 2011 • Review of PIs and Future Targets 2011/12 – 2013/14 • Governance PIs • Performance – Year-End 2010/11
Thursday 14 July 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Risk Register
Thursday 22 September 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Appetite • Performance – 1st Quarter 2011/12
Thursday 10 November 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Risk Register • Performance – 2nd Quarter 2010/11